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THESIS

**THE INFLUENCES AND SOURCES OF
POST-SOVIET RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY
A VIEW OF THE CAUCASUS REGION**

by

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September, 1996

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A VIEW OF THE CAUCASUS REGION**

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Lieutenant, United States Navy

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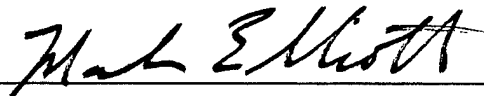
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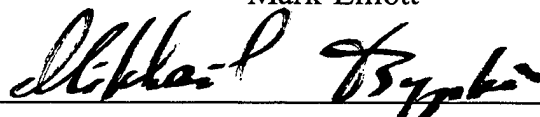
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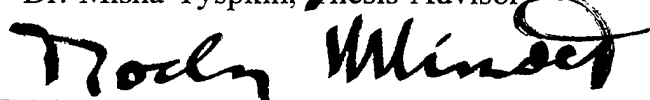


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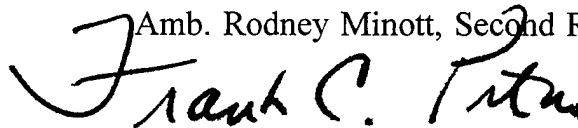
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ABSTRACT

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the apparent transition of its successor states to democracy gave rise to the hopes of greater cooperation between the United States and Russia. These hopes were met instead by a contradictory mix of cooperation and confrontation and the growing rumblings of a nationalistic Russia harboring fanciful desires of restoring its fallen empire. The aim of this thesis was to explore the various influences that shaped the goals and means of Russian foreign policy. The approach taken is to examine the synergistic effects of a variety of political, geographic, economic, cultural and ethnic influences rather than searching for a systemic explanation of Russian actions. Using the Caucasus region as a starting point for investigation, this author demonstrates how these factors, in combination and isolation account for the development of Russian action. Equally as important is the recognition that these factors are not new to post-Soviet but previously influenced both Imperial and Soviet Russia.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union created the hope in the West of a period of peaceful cooperation with Russia. International cooperation between the former rivals has often been inhibited by contradictory signals and moves by Moscow which have produced fears in the West of development of an expansionistic and combative Russia. Various explanations for post-Cold War Russian foreign policy have been forwarded; the most prominent suggest that Russia is returning to its despotic destiny or that Moscow is merely reacting as a large power would act given the current structural position of East Europe and Central Asia. Finding these explanations overly deterministic, this thesis attempted to identify a series of geographic, economic, ethnic and political factors that have influenced the formation and implementation of Moscow's policy. More importantly, because these factors have deep historical roots, it is possible to show both continuity in Russian actions and to hypothesize on the likely future course of events.

Chapters I and II of this thesis, outline the methodology of this argument and provide the historical foundation to support this view. In the subsequent four chapters, the influence of these geographic, economic, ethnic and political factors are examined in a contemporary context. The following chapter, VII, argues that U.S. foreign policy ignores the reality of these influences and that a new "Grand Strategy" which incorporates knowledge of these factors should be developed in order to ensure that the fruits of the Cold War victory are not lost. The final chapter, provides a summation of the contemporary situation and framework to examine Russian action in the future.

I. INTRODUCTION

On Christmas night, 1991, the Soviet hammer-and-sickle flag was lowered for the last time from its place high over the Kremlin, symbolically ending both the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire. The Russian tri-color that was hoisted atop the Kremlin minutes later flies over a vastly different and in some ways unknown and previously non-existent nation, a non-imperial Russia. It was in the process of throwing off the yoke of its Communist masters, that Russia also shed the majority of its imperial holdings. The embryonic Russia that emerged at the collapse of the Soviet Union continues to grapple with the challenging new dilemma of having to define not just its role in the world or type of national government, but a fundamentally more challenging question of what is Russia?

In the heady days that followed the collapse of Communism, the prospect of defining itself as a Western-style democracy through an emerging "constructive partnership" with the United States, based on mutual interests, appeared bright. Yet in the intervening years, Russia has fashioned a foreign policy that is increasingly at odds with the United States and the Western world. It is a policy that appears, to many Western nations, as more increasingly aggressive to its neighbors and more demanding of Western toleration for its actions. For Russia, the newly independent states that emerged from the Soviet Union, to which it refers to as the 'near abroad,' represent a clearly defined Russian sphere of influence; a sphere it demands the West respect and formally

recognize.¹

What brought about this apparent shift in Russian foreign policy from constructive partner to budding rival? Two contrasting schools of thought have emerged concerning the apparent change in Russian foreign policy. The first school argues that the move is the "return of Russian history." Devoid of both a history of democratic values to draw upon and lacking any significant contemporary counter-balances to a powerful state, Russia is slipping back into its historic patterns of authoritarianism and imperialism.

The second prominent school of thought sees in Russia's actions the manifestations of a great power seeking to balance its security at a time of tremendous internal and external upheaval.² Both of these arguments provide a predictive explanation, albeit a deterministic one, of Russian behavior without providing an understanding of the forces that drive not only the current policy, but perceptions of the surrounding world that shape and define that policy.

A critique of these theories' forecasting and predictive powers is not the intention

¹ Although a disparaging term since it implies that the newly independent states neighboring Russia are somehow less foreign and hence not completely sovereign, the term has been accepted by most commentators because it accurately reflects Moscow's perceptions and statements. For the purposes of this argument, the near abroad will refer to all of the newly independent states that have emerged from the former Soviet Union.

² For representative arguments of the contrasting schools see Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs*, 73, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 1994): 67-82 and Stephen Sestanovich, "Giving Russia Its Due," *The National Interest*, 36 (Summer 1994): 3-13. These are the most forceful arguments for the Imperial vs Great Power view of Russia. For similar discussion see also Dimitri Simes, "The Return of Russian History," *Foreign Affairs*, 73, no. 1 (January/February 1994) and Jack Snyder, "Russian Backwardness and the Future of Europe," *Daedalus* 123 no 4 (Spring 1994): 179-199.

of this thesis.³ Rather, its purpose is to investigate the value of recognizing the continuing interplay and influence of the historical, cultural and geographic factors that define the course of political interaction without falling victim to historical determinism. This thesis will endeavor to present an alternative view for understanding Russian foreign policy since 1991 by drawing on and showing a linkage to "persistent factors" present in Russia's relations with the outside world.⁴ These factors, as Alfred Rieber writes, have persistently and uniquely confronted Russia throughout its history. Moreover, they have offered "both a range of possibilities and a set of constraints in [Russia's] dealings with other states."⁵ Advancing upon Alfred Rieber's historical analysis which identified these conditions, this thesis will relate the same argument to a case study of the Post-Soviet Russian foreign and security policy.

The basis of the argument rests on connecting these factors to Russian foreign and security policy. Essentially, Russia today, like its Tsarist and Soviet predecessors, must craft its policy in light of the four "persistent factors." The first factor is the "porous or permeable" nature of Russia's borders. Such a condition arose because of the nature of Russian expansion and the external pressures arrayed against it. The result is that Russia's borders are marked by a demographic hodgepodge of ethnic groups. Patently

³ For a negative view of the value and continuing relevance of International relations theory see John Lewis Gaddis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War," *International Security*, 17 no. 3 (Winter 1992/1993): p. 5-58.

⁴ Alfred J. Rieber, "Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy," in Hugh Ragsdale, ed., *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993). See also Cyril E. Black, "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," in Ivo J. Lederer, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy, Essays in Historical Perspective* (Yale University Press, New Haven. 1962)

⁵ *ibid*, p. 322.

evident in the days of the Russian and Soviet Empires, this factor remains true today in spite of the dissolution of the Empire. These groups, just as in the past, are clustered on both sides of the new borders, yet they remain compact enough to entertain national aspirations. Intermingled with these various peoples are ethnic Russians, who have, over time, often surpassed the indigenous population in sheer size. The intermingling effect of colonization, Russification and industrialization (which brought vast numbers of Russians to urban centers on the Empire's frontier) made it impossible to demarcate a clear ethnic dividing line. The lack of a clear ethnic boundary, combined with the inherent conflict generated from opposing nationalist sentiment have made the frontiers of the Russian Empire historically unstable, prone to conflict and a potential threat to the state center.⁶ Moreover, the presence of these ethnic groups on both sides of the border has produced a diaspora that has agitated for the rights of its cross-border kin. Such a situation makes any inter-ethnic conflict within Russia the potential basis for an international dispute.

The second persistent factor is the traditional "economic inferiority" of Russia. The economic strength of the Russian state, except for a few rare occasions, has generally been weaker than its contemporaries. This 'inferiority' has held true regardless of the

⁶ Rieber, p. 329-338. Black, in "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," argues essentially the same point although he addresses the same concept, not as a persistent factor, but as continuing an objective of the Russian state. For an excellent survey of Russian colonial expansion detailing both the treatment and problem of absorbing ethnic nationalities, see Michael Rywkin, Ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, (Mansell, London, 1988).

economic or industrial time period or the economic unit of measure.⁷ Constructing policies to mitigate economic disadvantages while simultaneously seeking to leap ahead have been staples of Russian policy since Peter the Great. Moreover, the perceived solution to this problem of "backwardness or inferiority" has been, almost inevitably, the exploitation of the natural wealth and resources found on the outer frontier of the state.⁸

The third factor is the multi-ethnic aspect of the Russian and Soviet Empires. Although the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the concurrent independence of the Republics has dramatically changed the ethnic composition of Russia, it remains a multi-ethnic state. Currently, in the Russian Federation, ethnic Russians account for 81 percent of the total population as opposed to just over 50 percent of the total population of the Soviet Union.⁹ The increased percentage of Russians is misleading since in many of the Republics that form the new Russian state, especially in the Caucasus area, Russians are in the minority.¹⁰

At its height, the Soviet Empire encompassed over 102 distinct ethnic groups. These groups ranged in size from a high of roughly 145 million persons of ethnic Russian

⁷ These units could be in the easily recognizable form of Gross National Product per capita for recent years, agricultural yield or finished goods and products from the 19th century or population per square mile, a method to determine potential agricultural production before industrialization.

⁸ Rieber, p. 322-329. And Black, p. 17. See also William C. Fuller, Jr. *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914*, (Macmillan, New York, 1992).

⁹ Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda, *Soviet Disunion, A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR*, (Free Press, New York, 1990). See also, *Russia: An Economic Profile*, (United States Government Publication, 1994).

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 60.

descent to nearly a dozen ethnic groups with less than 5000 persons.¹¹ The pattern of conquest, combined with the religious and cultural origins of the various peoples made assimilation difficult to counter-productive. Moreover, the rise of a true Russian nationalism in the 19th century, a period of great conquest, sparked, in many ways, the development of national consciousness among other ethnic groups. What this produced was an empire that encompassed clusters of non-Russian ethnic groups. In addition, it created a situation where, unlike the great European overseas colonial empires, the distinction between colonial province and Russia proper was ill-defined.¹² The outcome of this pattern of settlement and conquest, with resulting mixed ethnic group territories and a high concentration of non-Russians on both sides of the border, remains a significant influence on policy formation.

The last of the persistent factors is "Cultural Marginality." The phrase, as coined by Alfred Rieber, does not mean an inferior or lesser culture but a culture that developed along the margins of the world's cultural and intellectual traditions. All of the cultures that Russia has encountered have influenced and directed its cultural development but none clearly define it. For Russians, the term is manifested in the lingering debate over

¹¹ The data on ethnic groups can be extremely complex and confusing. What for instance is a distinct ethnic group and what is tribal or division within a larger group? Additionally, the number and size of nationalities is widely debated. For detailed information on ethnic groups see Ronald Wixman, *The Peoples of the USSR, An Ethnographic Handbook*, (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, NY, 1984). See also Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, (Westview Press, Boulder Co.1991), and Nahaylo and Swoboda, *Soviet Disunion* as well as *Russia: An Economic Profile*.

¹² See Michael Rywkin, Ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, (Mansell, London, 1988).

the direction, East or West, that Russia should follow in defining its political, economic and social structures. The argument for a third or uniquely Russian way expands this debate.¹³

Having established the perspective in which to analyze contemporary Russian policy, it is essential to clearly define the bounds of the pending investigation. The far-reaching and critical question this thesis seeks to answer is: what are the influences that shape the Post-Soviet Russian foreign and security policy? In order to answer this question, this thesis will narrow its scope to an examination of foreign and security policy in the Caucasus region. Reiber's analytic framework applied to this region will demonstrate the continued influence of these "persistent factors" on policy issues.

The Caucasus was chosen for several reasons. First, the region is an undisputed juncture of the World's cultural and religious heritages. The influences of the Byzantine Empire, Ottoman Empire and Persian Empires are to be found within the area's many states. Adding to the cultural variety is the multitude of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. The area therefore allows for the investigation of the multi-cultural aspects and influences on policy.

Second, the area has a rich history of both independent states as well as resistance to external domination. The area proved to be a continuing challenge to both Czar and

¹³ For contemporary discussion of the direction Russia should follow see, Alexei G. Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," *International Security*, 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 5-43. Also, Alexander Rahr, "Atlantacists versus Eurasians in Russian Foreign Policy," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 1, no. 22 (May 29, 1992): 17-22. Stephen Sestanovich, "Russia In Search of Itself," *The National Interest*, 28 (Summer 1992): 47-55. Roman Szporluk, "After Empire: What?" *Daedalus* 123, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 21-39

Commissar's efforts to maintain the area within the realm of the Russian Empire. From this, it will be possible to examine the political and military aspects of foreign and security policy.

The critical role the region will play in the economic development of the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and the Central Asian states is the third reason.¹⁴ The region's economic potential, in natural resources alone, has drawn a host of nations, from Russia to the Middle East to the Western states into its affairs. In the efforts to develop the oil and gas reserves of the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, Russia has demanded that its oil firms be made a significant partner for revenue sharing purposes in all exploration and production projects.¹⁵ Moscow's demands would seem incredible if it were not for their ferocity, given Russia's lack of capital for exploration and its inferior production and refining technology.¹⁶ The growing competition for the area's economic resources will allow this thesis to investigate the extent to which economic interests have shaped policy.

Fourth, since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the region has been torn by internal and external strife. The conflicts have alarmed and involved numerous nations in a range of activities from mediator, to peacekeeper to agent provocateur. The likelihood of these

¹⁴ For the purposes of this paper, Central Asian States refer, in group, to the five newly independent states east of the Caspian Sea. These are of course, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

¹⁵ Stephen J. Blank, *Energy and Security in TransCaucasia*, (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. 1994).

¹⁶ "British Petroleum Will Develop Caspian Oil," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 46, no. 9, March 30, 1994. p. 22-23.

conflicts being resolved in the near future is slim. Understanding the origins of these conflicts and their potential to spark more far reaching troubles is a key U.S. foreign policy goal.

The last reason for choosing the Caucasus region for investigation is that it demonstrates the extremely close interaction between domestic and foreign affairs. It can clearly be argued that for all nations their foreign policies are shaped and defined by numerous domestic concerns and pressure.¹⁷ For Russia, however, the interaction is much stronger and quite often the distinction between domestic and foreign policy, especially in dealing with its "nationalities" in the border areas, hardly exists at all.

The relevancy and importance of this topic is the potential understanding of Russian foreign policy motivations both in the Caucasus and potentially across the whole of the "near abroad." The issues at play in the Caucasus, both in foreign and domestic policy, are similar in many aspects to relations between Russia and the other newly independent states. The effects of border disputes, and the manner in which Russia forms and implements policy in the Caucasus may demonstrate useful parallels for the settling

¹⁷ For theoretical examination of the domestic versus structural influence on foreign policy see, Jack Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, (Conference on the origins of War, 1986) or Peter Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed," *International Organization*, 32, 1978. p881-912 or Michael Barnett and Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments," *International Organization*, 45, no. 3, Summer 1991. p. 369-395 and Hans J. Morganthau, *Politics Among Nations*, (Knopf, New York, 1986). For arguments on the domestic influence on Russian/Soviet foreign policy see, Serweryn Bialer, *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy*, (Westview, Boulder CO., 1981). Or, Morton Schwartz, *The Foreign Policy of the USSR: Domestic Factors*, (University of California Press, Riverside CA., 1975). And, Richard E. Pipes, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Affairs," in Ivo J. Lederer, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy, Essays in Historical Perspective*. (Yale University Press, New Haven. 1962).

of other territorial disputes. This thesis is also relevant to understanding issues within other parts of the Russian Federation, where both ethnic nationalism and regionalism have served as motivation for seeking greater autonomy and independence from Moscow.

Economic interests as well are replicated elsewhere and, in fact, the Caucasus have an important bearing on the economic potential of the Central Asian States since these nations, for the near term, will rely on the extraction and export of natural resources, via the Caucasus, to drive economic development in the region.

Ethnic and cultural differences are not confined to the Caucasus. The budding ethnic conflict between Russians and the native population in Ukraine, the Baltic states or Kazakstan are similar to the tensions in the Caucasus region, although in these cases it is ethnic Russians who are the cultural and ethnic minority. How Russia reacts toward its own ethnic minorities and the manner in which it solves inter-ethnic disputes may have a potential spill-over effect to its neighbors. Moreover, the North Caucasus share much with other Russian republics such as Tatarstan and Bashkotarstan in their efforts to expand and increase their sovereignty.

With disorder and conflict becoming the basic tenets of the post-Cold War world, it will be more important than ever before to have an understanding of and appreciation for the factors that shape national activity, not just a grasp of a nation's theoretical options within the international system. The value of this thesis is that it connects Russian policy to these historical and cultural forces allowing for a more thorough, and arguably better, understanding of the motivations and implications of these actions.

The body of this thesis therefore is structured to examine, first the factors in historical perspective and then in the contemporary context. This is followed by a study of the implications for future relations within the region. Specifically, the second chapter of this thesis will examine the underpinnings of the "persistent factors." The author does not seek or intend to restate or endeavor to improve upon previous scholarship, but simply to offer a basis of his own interpretation of these concepts and to introduce historical evidence more appropriate to this study. The following four chapters will then examine each of the "factors" in turn, in relation to present Russian policy. The thesis will close with an examination of the potential United States' policy toward Russia.

II. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND HISTORICAL SETTING

Before examining the contemporary policy of the post-Soviet Russian state, the analytical framework and the historical evidence of the influence of the "persistent factors" needs to be outlined.¹ Each of the four previously mentioned "persistent conditions" has existed throughout the history of the Russian state regardless of the nature, strength or ambitions of the nation's rulers. It is the recognition of the existence of these conditions and of the need to mitigate their negative impact on the Russian state that has served as the driver of foreign policy development. In the effort to investigate the nature and influence of porous borders, it is useful to clearly state how this author adapts and applies Alfred Rieber's analytic approach to form an hypothesis of how "persistent factors" have and continue to influence Russian foreign and security policy. To show this linkage, this chapter will first outline the theoretical foundation for the framework of analysis, which suggest how conditions affect Russia and then, second, it will provide brief historical illustration to support this argument.

A. THE NATURE OF POROUS FRONTIERS

1. The Analytical Framework: The Expanding Search For Security

Lacking an ethnographic or geographic demarcation line, Russia's borders have been historically ill-defined. Being ill-defined, much area on both sides of the border has been subject to conflicting claims of suzerainty. More importantly, indigenous ethnic

¹ The goal here is not to replicate or repeat Rieber's argument but to provide those unfamiliar with his work a foundation for the contemporary discussion. Any lapses in applying this argument are, of course, the fault of this author and should not be considered a reflection of Reiber's scholarship.

groups claim national rights in broad areas of Russia, even though these areas harbor a significant Russian ethnic minority. Across this malleable divide flow people, money, armaments and, most importantly, ideas. The latter being, from the Russian perspective the most dangerous since ideas such as nationalism, democracy and religious fundamentalism can and have brought domestic conflict to Russia.

Several geographic and social elements combine to form the concept of porous frontiers. These inter-related and inter-dependent elements are (1) the vulnerability of the Russian state to invasion, (2) the inability to support defensive measures because of low population density, (3) limited state authority and coercive power along the empire's frontier, (4) the inability to control the out-migration of the population and (5) the gradual absorption of various non-Russian ethnic groups within the bounds of the state.

From the Muscovite Russia to the post-communist Russian state, these conditions have forced Russia's rulers to link the vitality and survivability of the state with its ability to control its porous frontiers.² Foreign and security policy were thus fashioned in an effort to protect the frontier from both an foreign threat as well as domestic disturbance. Normally, these policies involved a combination of two tactics. First, the formation of political alliances or the establishment of protectorates with the eventual inclusion into the empire or second, the extension of rule through military conquest. In both cases, the ultimate design was to limit the cross-border threat of military invasion and infectious

² See Cyril E. Black, "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," in Ivo J. Lederer, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy, Essays in Historical Perspective*. (Yale University Press, New Haven. 1962). Black discusses the pattern of border stabilization efforts in relation to the problem of porous borders.

ideology.

These efforts however were often self-defeating because, as Russia pushed out to neutralize potential threats, new ones were created. Since Russia's outward thrust to stabilize the border often involved the absorption of existing political and social units under Russian sovereignty, the process inevitably led to the inclusion of various ethnic groups with different social, political and economic systems. The existing social systems, for the most part, could not be readily incorporated into the Russian social structure. Moreover, the terms of their loyalty to the Russian state were often viewed differently locally than from Moscow's perspective.

Additionally, this expansion through alliance, conquest and later settlement, always exceeded Russia's ability to enforce its suzerainty over the land and its inhabitants. Thus, the permeability of the new borders often mirrored that of the old border. In areas of political vacuum, a condition that was wide-spread in the area surrounding Russia, the ability to establish political and economic order was extremely limited. Often control broke down at the empire's edges, immediately outside a military garrison. The advancing Russians also brought very meager bureaucratic ability and resources to these new territories, far short of what was required to establish stability, promote economic growth and ensure the area's defense.

Expanding outward to fill the vacuum of "porous frontiers," Russia not only failed to fill the political chaos, but created and absorbed a wide assortment of combative and hostile ethnic groups. The evolutionary process of settlement and conquest, however, blurred the distinction, at least to Russians, of what was Russia and what was not. For the

surviving and emerging minority nations, no such problem existed. In the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse, the depth and breadth of surviving nationalism was unmistakable. Yet the collapse of the Union did not remove the threat of minority nationalism that arises from "porous frontiers."

2. History's Minefields: The Vulnerability of Expansion

Of all the elements that define the first persistent condition, "porous frontiers," the most enduring and pressing for Russia has been the vulnerability of its borders to invasion. Outside invaders have struck Russia with the appearance of clockwork regularity, from its earliest existence as Kievan Rus, prior to the thirteenth century, to well into the middle of the twentieth century. Equally as remarkable as the frequency of invasion, is the consistency of the Russian response. Starting with the Muscovite state, Russian strategy for stabilizing its borders and ensuring its security has been outward expansion. As historian Cyril Black noted, the problem of defensible borders was less one of geography and more "of a coming to terms with the political powers on the other side of the border."³ Invariably, this process of coming to terms involved the acquisition or absorption of surrounding territories and peoples through military or political action.

The success of this process proved illusive. Starting in the mid-fourteenth century, Muscovite Russia with its consolidation of the various Russian principalities complete, embarked on an effort to emerge from under the suzerainty of the remnant of the Golden

³ Cyril E. Black, *Understanding Soviet Politics, The Perspective of Russian History*, (Westview Press, Boulder Co., 1986). p. 184.

Horde.⁴ Two hundred years of intermittent warfare yielded, for Muscovy, the conquest of Kazan and increased protection from the raids of the Mongols, as well as relief from the monetary tribute owed to the ruling Khan.⁵

The conquest of Kazan had a profound impact on the fledgling Muscovite state transforming it from a semi-feudal predominately single-ethnic state into the beginnings of a multi-ethnic empire. Unlike the conquest or alliance with opposing Russian principalities located north of the steppe, Kazan was populated by a society that was radically different from Muscovy in terms of ethnicity, religion and social organization. Where it was possible to fully coopt a culturally and religiously similar ruling class in the Slavic areas of Muscovy Russia, in Kazan it was not. The conquest of Kazan would establish a pattern, suggested by historian Michael Rywkin, where these territories were not made colonies or protectorates but incorporated directly into the Russian state.⁶ Although the Russian conquest eliminated the threat of invasion from Kazan, it did not remove the threat of foreign invasion.

The process of securing borders through the conquest proved to create as many

⁴ The purpose of this overview is not to detail the process of Russian expansion, but to illuminate the conquests and the resulting influence on Russian security and foreign policy. For detailed description of Muscovy Russia's emergence and conquest of empire see, Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1984) or Michael Rywkin, Ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, (Mansell, London, 1988).

⁵ See, Henry R. Huttenbach, "The Conquest of the Volga: Prelude to Empire," in Michael Rywkin, Ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, (Mansell, London, 1988).

⁶ See, Michael Rywkin, "Russian Central Colonial Administration: From the *Prikaz* of Kazan to the XIX Century, a Survey," in Michael Rywkin, Ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, (Mansell, London, 1988).

problems as it solved. The move generated internal domestic unrest by a culturally and religiously different people; foreign neighbors reacted worriedly over future Russian ambitions and the relatively open and sparsely lands of the conquered areas induced serfs and peasants to flee from Russia proper damaging the economy and the government's tax base.

Further expansion in the second half of the sixteenth century pushed the edges of the state up against the Caucasus mountain region which also served as the juncture of two expanding empires, the Russian and Ottoman and two declining empires, the Safavi (Persia) and the Khanate of Crimea. This region of rugged terrain and isolated communities was populated by an amazing variety of ethnic groups with equally various religious, social and economic organizations. Although the majority of the region was under Ottoman or Persian rule, the isolated terrain and fierce independence of the tribal societies provided for a large measure of local autonomy.⁷ The varied ethnic and especially religious differences in the area caused frequent conflict among the numerous lesser principalities. Local rulers, in an effort to ensure and expand their own power, turned to the larger empires for assistance. Russia advanced in the Caucasus piecemeal supporting Christian Kingdoms and allies, as well as advancing still further in order to protect the regime's current borders.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Russian colonization of the Caucasus was complete. The pattern of conquest in which new territory was invaded to protect recent

⁷ See, Muriel Atkin, "Russian Expansion in the Caucasus to 1813," in Michael Rywkin, Ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, (Mansell, London, 1988). p. 141.

additions both underscores and illustrates the continuity of "porous borders." Because the conquered lands were incorporated into Russia proper, it became a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic empire. These differences would rise to a boiling point in the late 1980's and contribute to the undoing of the Soviet empire. More importantly, these influences remain. The ebb and flow nature of the colonization and conquest of the Caucasus has produced an intermingling of ethnic groups and conflicting claims and counter-claims over historical homelands. The spirit and memory of the resistance to Russian advances is not so old as to be forgotten, especially when reenforced by seventy years of Soviet Russian oppression.

B. THE NATURE OF ECONOMIC INFERIORITY

1. The Analytic Framework: Minimizing Inferiority

The second persistent factor in Russian history that concerns us is the relative economic inferiority of Russia. Throughout its history, Russia, as Alfred Rieber suggests, has "lagged behind other major powers [economically]."⁸ Regardless of the nature of the economic system or the standards by which wealth is measured, several factors have constantly limited and hindered the growth of the Russian economy. Foremost among these are (1) the poor communications infrastructure, (2) the general low population in the pre-industrial period and later the shortage of skilled and unskilled workers in key geographic areas since the nineteenth century, (3) undeveloped or underdeveloped

⁸ Alfred J. Rieber, "Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretive Essay," in Hugh Ragsdale, ed., *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), p. 322.

markets and (4) a low or lagging assimilation of technology by the general population.

While the impact of these factors has varied over time, generally, they have made it difficult for Russia to adequately feed, clothe and supply both its population and a standing army. The relative isolation of much of the population to well into the twentieth century made the infusion of technology into the general society, a necessary precondition for greater efficiency and improved output, difficult because of a lack of communication avenues and the low skills among the populace. Most importantly from the Kremlin's perspective, these factors combined to limit the effectiveness of both the local and national government which, in turn, hampered the efficient and uniform collection of taxes.

For a nation so frequently engaged in wars of defense and conquest, economic inferiority and the resultant poverty of the national government was a critical national deficiency requiring drastic action. Overcoming or minimizing these relative inferiorities were necessary prerequisites for the rulers of Russia in order to wage wars of defense or conquest. Acquiring the requisite wealth, material and manpower became an all-consuming effort of the occupants of the Kremlin. To accomplish this task, Russian leaders turned predominately to three strategies. First among these for both its duration and impact was the rigid centralization of the state economy. Second, was the acquisition of new resources through expansion and lastly, the direct opening of society for acquisition of foreign technology or capital.

Russia's economy, since the very earliest times, has operated as a command driven wartime economy. From the perspective of Russia's amazing territorial expansion and its ability to overcome and defeat wealthier and more technologically advanced foes, the

ever-tightening grip imposed by Tsar and commissar was successful. Yet this success sowed the seeds of its own destruction since the command nature of the economy restricted or prevented the development of self-sustaining markets, advanced technology and specialized as well as highly skilled labor.

Because of the need to support a militarized state, Russian economic policy, with a few rare exceptions, has not been fashioned to generate general economic growth or national prosperity, but to minimize the effects of relative inferiority on a military level. By concentrating assets, both human and capital, Russia has supported enormous costs to obtain its foreign policy objectives even as the overall economic well-being of the nation stagnated or declined. The rare turns away from policies that advocated concentration and central control were motivated less by a spirit of reform than by a leadership decision that only the infusion of outside capital or technology could minimize the economic inferiority and reduce Russia's security risks.

Regardless of the nation involved, war and national security is, to a large measure, a matter of economics. Armies require materiel, men and supplies, and these require treasure.

2. Turning Butter into Guns

The rise of the Muscovy state and its preeminent position in establishing the Russian state and freeing it from the Mongol yoke owe, in large measure, to the ability of the Muscovy rulers to raise money to consolidate Slavic domains and raise a fighting force. As the noted historian of Russia, Nicholas Riasanovsky suggests, the rulers of Muscovy benefited from their initial subservience to the Mongol, since they acquired

political power by serving as the intermediate between the Russian principalities and the Golden Horde for the collection and payment of tribute.⁹ This source of revenue and power enabled Muscovy to expand and ultimately challenge their foreign rulers.

The Russian expansion outward in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would call for expanding and consistent sources of revenue. In addition, the nearly continuous warfare and expansion created a permanent need for military officers and government administrators. To ensure both men and money, the Tsars of Russia embarked on widespread reshaping of society. The boyar or gentry class, the primary source of officers and administrators, came under increasing obligation to the Kremlin. These obligations were balanced by the grant of land by the Tsar and the increase of restrictions placed upon the peasants, further bonding them to the land and to their gentry overlords.¹⁰

Serfdom began to emerge as the key underpinning of Russia's economy. Although serfdom prevented or at least served as a brake on the development of a service or merchant class, Russia continued to expand the institutional underpinnings of bondage, principally to ensure continued revenue from agriculture and the loyalty of the gentry class. Rather than serving as a brake on the Russian economy and foreign expansion, serfdom benefited the government by increasing the efficiency of its tax collecting, conscription and agricultural production.

Under Peter the Great, routinely hailed as the promoter of Western ideas for

⁹ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1984), p. 109-110.

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 159.

Russia, the advantages of serfdom for the state were clearly recognized and exploited. To ensure payment and to reward service, landlords were given greater powers over serfs and were the integral part of the state's tax collection apparatus.

The Petrine period also saw a new theme in Russian economic history, the wholesale adoption and importation of foreign technology in order to bridge the gap between east and west. The foreign technology Peter desired was of course very costly and for the cash-poor Russian state, acquiring the necessary capital to fund these purchases was a difficult undertaking. To accomplish this, Peter imposed ever-greater centralized control of the economy and institutionalized the government's dependence on serf-based taxes or production as the source for raising capital. Although Western economic development, which was then progressing toward free labor and market based production, offered Russia the best long-term economic opportunities. In essence, Peter's situation was the balancing of opposing economic trends; reform and the promotion of markets with the long-term prospect of technologic innovation and economic efficiency or the continuation of serfdom in order to generate the most near-term revenue necessary for the prosecution of foreign wars and the purchase of foreign technology.

From the rise of Muscovy through the nineteenth century, the Kremlin was able to minimize the poverty of the state, both in fiscal and manpower terms, by relying on serf-based agricultural production. Because the pace of technological development was relatively slow, the difference between technologically advanced powers and Russia was slight, especially in the military sector. The problems of Russian backwardness were easily offset by its greater ability to obtain troops from conscription, vice the costly hiring

of foreign mercenaries which was the practice of most European states as well as by its ability to restructure society to obtain tax revenue.

The rapid change in military weaponry in the 1830's served to make arms that had changed little in over two-hundred years obsolete overnight. The introduction of the Minie ball and rifled muskets as well as rifled cannon changed not just weapons but the tactics upon which wars were fought. Along with the change in land weapons came the equally revolutionary change that accompanied steam engines in railroads on land and steam-driven warships on the high seas.

For Russia, champion in the fight against Napoleon and gendarme of Europe for the following years, its defeat in the Crimean war (1854-1855) against a smaller multinational force from Great Britain, France and Turkey, was shocking revelation of the dramatic change in warfare in brief span.¹¹ Clearly, to compete with the West militarily, Russia needed a Herculean effort of railroad construction, weapons upgrades and most importantly, healthier and more intelligent recruits to fight an increasingly complex warfare environment.¹²

Where serfdom had proved advantageous for Tsars from Peter the Great to Alexander I, it was now a decided handicap for Alexander II. Russian agricultural production, as well as the ever-tightening restrictions on serfs, reached their zenith by the

¹¹ See, William C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914*, (Free Press, New York, 1992) for the impact of the Crimean war on Russian strategic thought. See also, Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967).

¹² Fuller, p. 273-289 provides an analysis of the military problems confronting Russia after the Crimean war.

end of the eighteenth century.¹³ Production and government revenues could no longer grow by increasing the pressure on serfs for payment in agricultural products. Economics in the 19th century began to evolve into a monetary based system of trade, but the nature of this system caused difficulties for Russia, since its economy was based on barter and trade. Landlords could no longer survive taking serf labor or agricultural production as payment for loans or to satisfy tax requirements nor could the government easily turn agricultural products into hard currency. Debt among the gentry class was increasing and many saw unproductive and unmotivated serf labor as a drain on the economy and hinderance to the development of a profit based agricultural industry.¹⁴

Emancipation and other reforms were designed to move away from a serf economy and toward a market-based system with greater revenue benefits. The reforms did have a significant economic impact on Russia seen in a fifty-fold jump in individual income and an equally dramatic jump in industrial output from emancipation to the turn of the 20th century. In spite of the growth, the lack of legal and political reforms hindered economic development and left deep structural problems in the economy. The absence of political reform combined with the First World War produced not a change in the economic order, but in the political order. The new political masters, the Bolsheviks, like Peter before them were faced with a tremendous economic crisis and a multi-front war that threatened their existence. Once again, the Kremlin chose the drastic path of centralized control.

¹³ Riasanovsky, p. 341-342.

¹⁴ *ibid*, p. 369.

Under the rubric of "War Communism," nearly all of private enterprise disappeared.¹⁵

The failures of this policy eventually forced the Bolshevik leadership to abandon the immediate move to socialism in favor of Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP). The NEP loosened restrictions on small industries and enabled peasants to till the land for profit.¹⁶ The move both restored and expanded the agricultural sector as well as small industry.

While the NEP was producing economic success among peasants and small retailers, the state-run heavy industries were unable to generate the revenue necessary to expand and modernize. Without new sources of revenues, the creation of an advanced military industrial complex could not occur. To obtain the funding, the Communist Party, by this time run by Joseph Stalin, ended the NEP and forced the peasants into collective farms.¹⁷ By gaining control over agricultural production, the state seized control of the Soviet Union's most marketable and profitable commodity at home and abroad. The hard currency earned by the export of food enabled the Soviets to purchase the necessary technology and equipment to undertake their vast industrialization process.¹⁸ The cost of millions of lives through starvation and outright murder was seen as an acceptable price to overcome the deficiency of the socialist system in generating investment capital.

Skipping ahead sixty years, the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev under his policy of

¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 479.

¹⁶ *ibid*, p. 489.

¹⁷ Heller, p. 233.

¹⁸ Riasanovsky, p. 495.

Perestroika, were in keeping with the efforts of Peter the Great, Alexander II and Lenin to drag the Russian economy forward. They called for a reordering of society to obtain foreign technology. Like his predecessors, Gorbachev was motivated by his declining status as a military power. Unlike Stalin, he could not control the political forces that emerged during the necessary opening of markets to obtain foreign capital and technology.

From the Muscovite period through to post-Soviet Russia, the relative inferiority of the economy has forced the political leadership to undertake dramatic efforts to minimize its relative inferiority in order to compete militarily with the major powers. As suggested here, this reshaping of the economy has been traditionally aimed at obtaining sufficient capital to field an army as well as obtain foreign technology. Reshaping of the economy has also varied from oppressive to liberal depending upon the need of the rulers. For Peter the Great, the oppression of Serfdom held advantages. When these advantages faded, reform took hold. The Communist period mirrors the past patterns of centralization and relaxation and back again.

C. THE MULTI-ETHNIC STATE: A NON-RUSSIAN, RUSSIAN EMPIRE

1. The Analytic Framework: Domestic Foreign Policy

The pattern and pace of Russia's outward expansion, which resulted in the rise of porous frontiers along its perimeter, also left the empire with numerous ethno-nationalist blocs within its boundaries. The absorption of peoples and states on such a vast scale left relatively large and highly concentrated enclaves of non-Russians both along the empire's perimeter as well as deep within Russia itself.

The Russian empire, like other empires up to and during the rise of the nation-state

was a multi-ethnic empire, built on dynastic lines rather than a shared political philosophy or common ethno-nationalist vision. The rise of nationalism in the 19th century, which helped to unite Germany and prepare for the downfall of the multi-ethnic Hapsburg and Ottoman empires also struck fear into the Russian monarchy. The various ethnic blocs within the empire encompassed a wide range of ethnic, religious and cultural groups that, almost invariably, found themselves in conflict with the aspirations and demands of the predominately Russian-ruled empire. The ethnic groups most in contact with Western ideas, the Poles, the Ukrainians, and the Finns rapidly developed a national ethnic consciousness which threatened to undermine vast areas of the Russian empire. Ethnic groups in the Caucasus and Central Asian were less infused with a Western-style nation than to traditional religious and clan affiliations, either way, these affinities represented potential cleavages in the Russian empire.

The principal threat to the ruling autocratic center was that the infectious fever of nationalism would spread throughout the empire and result in a single or series of revolts that would undermine the regime's stability, hinder its ability to defend itself against major European powers or invite intervention by outside powers. It was not just a latent threat of instability, for throughout Russia's colonial expansion, it fought and suppressed several separate and long-lasting revolts by ethno-nationalist groups. These internal revolts often produced an increase in international tensions as well. Bashkirs, Poles and Chechens repeatedly fought Russian colonial domination. The Poles alone fought series of revolts spread across one hundred years. In the rigidly hierarchial and economically weak society that was Tsarist Russia, the cost of the repeated and long-lasting fights against colonial

subjects accounted for the continued degradation of the armed forces and the hastened decline in military and economic power in relation to the rising Western states of the 19th century.

To combat nationalism which threatened to divide the multi-ethnic empire, both the Russian and Soviet regimes resorted to a variety of methods, offering both incentives and coercion. In predominately Slavic areas, both regimes used Russification efforts to either merge the local culture with Russian culture or to weaken the traditional ethnic bounds of the local people.¹⁹ In Orthodox areas, this was partially successful, but along the southern rim of the empire, where Islam and non-Orthodox Christianity were the dominant religions, Russification efforts were less successful. In these areas, colonialization of the area by Russians, originally Cossacks communities, but later Russian technical administrators and Communist party bureaucrats, was used to create a check against local nationalist forces. These transplanted Russians brought with them Russification efforts, designed not to turn the locals into Russians but to undermine the foundations of local nationalism. Schools, public business and commerce were conducted in Russian requiring locals to learn the language, and, often leave the area in order to progress economically. In addition, the central government manipulated standing ethnic antagonisms in order to create allies and undermine resistance to the center. Social and political elites of these national or clan groups were often coopted in these efforts through the extension of various privileges in return for their cooperation.

¹⁹ On the use of Russification efforts and the problems of ethnic minorities see, John B. Dunlop, "Language, Culture, Religion and National Awareness," in Robert Conquest, Ed., *The Last Empire, Nationality and the Soviet Future*, (Hoover Institute Press, Stanford CA., 1986).

These efforts were complicated by two equally dangerous factors for the ruling regime. First, was the potential for Russification efforts to backlash among the targeted groups. The Soviet/Russian historian and ethnologist, Anatoly Khazanov, suggests Russification efforts increased rather than lowered national consciousness among non-Russians because it highlighted the differences between Russia and their own culture.²⁰ Second, cross-border ethnic kin, co-religionist and concerned great powers often took a harsh and negative stance toward Russian efforts to pacify or suppress its ethnic minorities. Disputes with ethnic groups in the southern rim of the empire carried a heavy overtones of religious conflict and they threatened to invoke hostilities or retaliation from the Ottomans.

For the rulers of the Russian and Soviet empires, the threat of internal instability arising from an unassimilated and increasingly nationalistic minority was a constant if not growing threat. How to prevent this growth without engendering cross-border hostility or support for ethnic kin or co-religionists was a problem neither the Russian or Soviet empires solved. Domestic policy therefore had profound foreign policy implications. Policy from Moscow or St. Petersburg concerning ethnic groups needed to be crafted with "one eye...across the border."²¹

²⁰ Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Soviet National Policy during Perestroika*, (Delphic Associates Monograph Series, 1991). See also, Alexandre Bennigsen, "Soviet Minority Nationalism in Historical Perspective," in Robert Conquest, Ed., *The Last Empire, Nationality and the Soviet Future*, (Hoover Institute Press, Stanford CA., 1986).

²¹ Alfred J. Rieber, "Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretive Essay," in Hugh Ragsdale, ed., *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge).

2. Competitive Constraints: Religion and Nationalism

The Conquest of Kazan in the 15th century, transformed Russia into a multi-ethnic empire and multi-religious empire from a predominately Slavic and Orthodox state.²² This change was to profoundly influence the Empire's future development, both domestically and internationally.

The Muscovy state, like its contemporaries was based on dynastic power politics and not political ideology or ethnic bonds. Claiming to draw its power from a special relationship with the almighty and not a political contract with the masses, religion played a key role in justifying political power. It also played a key role in defining international opposition and cooperation. The absorption of Muslims into the Orthodox empire was to set off several hundred years of intermittent and repeated conflict between Russian and Islamic states.²³

Both Russia and the Islamic empires, primarily the Ottomans but also the Persian empire and the remaining Khanates, viewed their conquests in religious as well as political terms. In seeking to expand their powers, each sought the alliance of co-religionists in the disputed area. Conversion and colonialization also played key roles in strengthening the politico-religious forces. In addition, both the Turks and the Russians sought to check the influence and the power of the other by appealing to and claiming to represent co-religionists residing in their rival's state. Russia and Turkey became embroiled in several

²² Henry Huttenbach, "Muscovy's Conquest of Muslim Kazan and Astrakhan 1552-1556 and Muriel Atkin, "Russian Expansion in the Caucasus to 1813," in Michael Rywkin, Ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, (Mansell, London, 1988).

²³ *ibid.*

wars over Ottoman rule of Orthodox believers in Greece and the Balkans.²⁴

Until the 18th century, religious differences were the primary identifier and cause of inter-ethnic strife. The rise of nationalism in Western Europe however, spread into the Russian Empire and infused ethnic minorities. Poles, Finns and Ukrainians increasingly challenged Russian rule on nationalistic grounds. By the end of the First World War, national consciousness had begun to spread throughout the Caucasus and Central Asian regions.

Originally, the Bolsheviks called for ethno-national self-determination as a means to weaken the provisional government. In addition, once in power, the Bolsheviks undertook a policy of de-Russification in an effort to win the support of the new republics and ethnic minorities in their fight against the "whites."²⁵ The brief "flowering" of the nationalities under the Bolsheviks did not produce, as the Communist expected, socialist cooperation but a desire to stay outside the empire, a desire overturned by the Red Army.²⁶

These twin problems, religious differences and nationalism, served to weaken the hold of the empire over its subjects. After the 19th century, dynastic rule was increasingly challenged and the clamor for local autonomy or independence increased. Dealing with

²⁴ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1984). See pp. 265-267.

²⁵ Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Soviet National Policy during Perestroika*, (Delphic Associates Monograph Series, 1991).

²⁶ Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, (Westview Press, Boulder CO., 1991).

these problems became a paramount concern for both the Russian and Soviet rulers. Lacking a legitimate political right to govern, each weighed heavily on an all-encompassing autocratic ideology. Defeating threats to the autocracy was critical in order to prevent potential challenges to the regime. To achieve these ends, both empires instituted a series of nationality policies that sought through coercion and subversion to undermine native cultures and establish a imperial perspective.

The effect of these policies was often contradictory to the intended goal. Rather than undermining ethnic minorities, it served as ethnic awakening, heightening not lessening the schism between the edge and the center of the empire. In addition, outside powers, most frequently Turkey but often great powers at odds with Russia would react harshly to Russia's efforts, using appeals to ethnic cleavages as leverage against their.

For Russia, the ethnic minorities became wholesale enclaves of potential fifth columnists and rebels. Moreover, foreign powers seeking to pressure Russia manipulated ethnic groups by demanding special rights or privileges. Russia and later the Soviet Union's resort to Russification also failed by both sparking the growth of nationalism within the targeted group and by connecting Russian nationalism with oppression.

D. DEFINING POLITICAL CULTURE: NEITHER EAST NOR WEST

1. The Analytic Framework: "Half in Europe, Half in Asia"

"Cultural Marginality," the last of the "persistent factors," describes more a philosophic political condition than tangible situation. Its importance and influence in shaping Russian foreign and domestic policy is, however no less significant than the very real economic or ethnic factors. Russia's unique geographic location, at the juncture of

the world's diverse and influential political cultures meant that the empire's political development was influenced by a wide range of cultural forces. Western, Byzantine, Islamic and Oriental political systems have been and remain in contact with the Russian state. Russia, through conquest and being conquered, has been deeply influenced by each of these political cultures, yet clearly does not belong to any. Instead, Russia both borrows as it needs and sees fit, while conducting its affairs on a regional basis, according to the prevailing political traditions of the area.

Occasionally, the mental geographic dividing lines were not clear, causing both confusion and distrust among Western statesmen when Russia conducted steppe politics with the West. In the Balkans and the Caucasus region, Russia encountered three different political systems, (1) European system (2) Religious Imperial and (3) tribalism. St. Petersburg to maintain its empire, was forced to play several political roles at once, confusing both its adversaries and friends and perhaps itself in the process.

As the speed of communication and interdependence of geographic areas began to increase in the late 19th century, Russian foreign policy actions were no longer viewed in geographic isolation. Russia was increasingly seen as not fitting in the Western tradition. The confusion within Western circles was in reality mirrored within Russia by the divergent strains of factional leanings. From its earliest days as the Muscovy state, Russia has also faced in divergent directions. Its threats and influences were from both West and East, whether Nordic and Mongol or European nationalism and Central Asian tribalism. Different factions espoused opposing directions, the most notably and lasting distinctions were the 19th century debates between Westernizers and Slavophiles.

Neither was a clearly defined group with a common set of ideals, but in general, Westernizers sought to transform or model Russian political, economic and social development on the ideals of the Western enlightenment and German political philosophers. Slavophiles by contrast saw the West as decadent and the introduction of some Western ways by Peter I as a significant reason for Russia's 18th and 19th century declining status.²⁷

The differences were not merely whether to imitate the West or not. Instead, the opposing views carried profoundly different perspectives on the role and limits of the state in society. With this came opposing perspectives on how to develop both politically and socially but on what terms and what conditions, along with this came a geographical orientation. Westernizers were by definition interested in the West and in Europe. Slavophiles, although interested in Europe's Slavs, sought to separate as much as practical from Europe's vices to mold a uniquely Russian society involved primarily with Asia, the Balkans and the Near East.

These divergent and conflicting tendencies remain, reemerging in different guises through the balance of the Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet period as well. It is not a finished debate; the competing visions continue to pull Russian policy makers in opposite directions, confusing the West and themselves.

2. Between East and West: The Third Way

Autocracy, as critics and chroniclers of Russian political history point out, has been the mainstay of Russia's political culture. The consistency of autocracy as the

²⁷ Riasanovsky, p. 364.

principal form of government masks the deep changes and recurring fluctuations of the basis of the empire's political heritage. The Russian empire, caught in a peculiar geographic position, at the juncture of East and West as well as North and South, has grounded itself at various times in the traditions of cultures in which it was in contact. Where Russia fits into the world has depended less on its own political desires and more on the external environment and threats it faced. The rulers of the empire, both Russian and Soviet, have made conscious choices on which political culture and international order to follow, but this choice, as suggested above, was predicated on the domestic needs, dynastic power position and the economic shortfalls of the state. In seeking legitimacy to govern, the rulers of the empire have claimed justification from four divergent but political expedient cultural heritages.

First among these was heir to the legacy of the Khans. Although Muscovy claims its roots begin with Kievan Rus, its emergence to a position of power came about through its association with and opposition to the Khans of the Golden Horde. As the focal point for the collection of tribute to the Golden Horde, Muscovy gained economically. Its wealth grew to a point where it could challenge the continuation of Khan rule. As it struck outward by conquering Kazan, the Tsars of Muscovy carried on in the tradition of the Khan in establishing dependent kingdoms. They "resisted the temptation" to assume the "burden of Byzantine Nationalism" to justify their new expansion.²⁸ In doing so, they attempted to justify their right to rule over the new acquired Muslims by pointing to the continuation of Khan rule rather than foreign religious conquest.

²⁸ Reiber, p. 349.

Moreover, it was not simply the duplication of their claim to kingdom but the duplication of the manner of politics used on the Eurasian steppe. On the steppe, the exploitation of clan and dynastic loyalties in order to gain an advantage, as well as the frequent shifting of alliances for advantage, were well used and accepted practices of foreign politics.²⁹

The second cultural heritage adopted was the Byzantine mantle. This move, as Rieber suggests, was done for secular as well as religious reasons. Under assault from the Catholic (and later Protestant) kingdoms of Europe and the Islamic kingdom of the Ottomans, the move to become the defender of Byzantine, the third Rome, was designed to shore up the Tsar's secular and religious right to rule over the empire.

Like the adoption of Byzantium for a political foundation, the move into Europe, to become part of the European concert of nations, was also designed to shore up the Tsar's domestic base. Having defeated Napoleon at the gates of Moscow and marched into Paris to destroy the work of French nationalism, Russia moved to shore up Imperial power at home and abroad. By working with the European states to maintain the balance of power, Russia also sought to maintain the multi-ethnic empires that ruled the continent. It was an effort to destroy the foreign inspirations of nationalism that could prove deadly to their own multi-ethnic empire.

Russia's exile from the family of European nations following the First World War brought about a new shift in political foundations. The victory of the radical Bolshevik

²⁹ For a discussion of Russian colonial rule and political maneuvering on the Eurasian steppe see, Michael Rywkin, Ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, (Mansell, London, 1988).

forces left Russia cut-off from the West, both physically and mentally. Western nations after a few half-hearted intervention attempts and meager support for the "whites" broke all ties with Soviet Russia. The calls for a world-wide proletariat revolt underscored the West's perception of the danger of Red radicalism and need to isolate Moscow. The failure of the workers of the world to unite however shocked the new Communist regime more than the West. The Soviets, isolated in the remains of the Russian empire, quickly turned their attention to shoring up their political power base, as well as seeking to limit harsh attacks on the West. The reduced attacks on the West brought limited relief through political recognition, minor economic contact and, the Soviets believed, a postponement of foreign efforts to topple their government.

The brief reentry of the Soviet Union to the Western family of nations during the World War II dissipated quickly after the fall of Germany. Stalin's heavy-handed suppression of Eastern Europe and efforts to overthrow Western European governments by supporting internal subversion quickly alienated Moscow and led to the build-up of the West's political, economic and military forces. Until its collapse, the Soviet Union remained, essentially isolated from the free-world. Its contact, however wide was controlled and never accepted or trusted.

Throughout Russian history the tension between East and West have remained as have the various internal factions arguing for a switch in Russia's political direction. The move to identify Russia as East or West came more with the needs of the ruling regime to uphold their power than an accepted political identification. For Russians and the West, the process of Russia defining its political heritage will be important because it will

portend the state of future relations. The danger here is that the West, failing to understand the peculiar political heritage of Russia will misinterpret Moscow's moves, creating false illusions. Likewise, if Moscow shifts in one direction based on the potential immediate gain, as it often has done in the past, they too may become disillusioned by the lack of tangible returns.

III. POROUS FRONTIERS IN THE CAUCASUS: THE CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

For the early Muscovy Princes and Tsars, the manifestation of "porous frontiers" was the clear and continuing threat of invasion and pillage. To combat this threat, they conducted an *ad hoc* policy of outward expansion, generally designed to stabilize the frontier by neutralizing cross-border threats. This process of expansion modified but did not remove these threats, while simultaneously creating new problems associated with the concept of "porous frontiers."

While the collapse of the Soviet state and the dissolution of the Russian empire stripped away many of the conquered lands acquired through outward expansion, it did not eliminate or reverse the effects of the "persistent factors." In many aspects, the opposite is true; the collapse of the empire made the influence and importance of these "persistent factors" more relevant and increasingly more apparent. The end of the defacto Cold War security arrangements between East and West has led to the reemergence of long suppressed ethnic, national and religious expression in the area of and surrounding the former Soviet Union. These sentiments, often conflict-generating by their very nature, were aggravated when finally released from oppressive Russian and Soviet rule. Moreover, these problems, formerly at the outer fringes of the empire and its satellites, were brought closer to the Russian border. As Ednan Agayev, a Russian Foreign Ministry official noted in 1993, the areas of potential conflict are no longer bipolar in nature but "have largely shifted to the regional level...on the perimeter of our

frontiers."¹

Added to this mix of ethnic and nationalist reawakening across the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, is the internal Russian questioning of what type of state Russia is and where should its borders lay. Even among those advocating a democratic Russia, the push for Russian control or influence over the space of the former Soviet Union is high. The historically ill-defined nature of the Russian state has led many to argue the present form of Russia is both inadequate, unjust and dangerous.

All of this suggests that while the circumstances of the threats arising from porous frontiers has changed from the days of the Muscovy Princes and Tsars, this framework for analysis remains valid. Using this approach in a case study of the Caucasus region, this chapter will examine how the Post-Soviet Russia continues to face these persistent factors. To achieve this end, this chapter will discuss the contemporary nature of porous frontiers, followed by an examination of Russia's current policy response and how it continues the tradition of "stabilizing" the frontier.

A. THE FALLEN EMPIRE SYNDROME

The volatile situation of reemerging national and ethnic identification within the space of the former Soviet Union, is complicated by the psychological loss of empire felt by Russians of all stripes.² Ilya Prizel keenly observed that Russians saw the disunion efforts in 1990 and 1991 as an attempt to throw off communism but not as an effort to

¹ Ednan Agayev, "Foreign Policy Aspects of Russia's Security Concept," *International Affairs*, (October 1993): 3-5.

² Vera Tolz, "The Burden of the Imperial Legacy," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report*, 2, no. 20 (May 14, 1993): 41-46.

dissemble the USSR, hence when the break came, they were politically and psychologically ill-prepared to deal with the event.³ Alexei Pushkov, deputy editor of *Moskovskiy Novosti*, wrote the "fall of the USSR left Russia with shattered self-esteem and a feeling of humiliation. *A fallen empire syndrome haunts Russia*."⁴ (Emphasis in Original).

The syndrome Pushkov describes has caused confusion and anxiety among Russians over the nature of the new Russia and its relations with the now independent republics. This syndrome takes two forms. First is the sense of humiliation felt at the loss of the Russian Empire. At the root of this humiliation is the implication of a downgrading of the importance and stature of Russia. Whereas in the past, the Soviet Union had formed one of the world's two poles, Russia now finds itself an impoverished outcast with little control over its own destiny and surrounded by hostile states. The second aspect of this syndrome is the problem of coming to grips with what constitutes Russia. The tendency, both in Russia and abroad of equating the Soviet Empire with Russia has added to the historical confusion of where Russia's borders lay.

For many, the mere suggestion that these republics are or deserve to be independent is a insulting affront. Andranik Migranyan gave a semi-official airing of this view when he wrote of "the transitional nature of the establishment of statehood," to

³ Ilya Prizel, "The United States and a Resurgent Russia: A New Cold War or a Balance of Power Recast?" in *Does Russian Democracy have a Future?* Stephen Blank and Earl Tilford Jr. eds. (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks Pa., 1994).

⁴ Alexei Pushkov, "Is Yeltsin Becoming a Dictator?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 December 1993.

describe the Post-Soviet political landscape.⁵ As he argued for "special rights" for Russia in this areas, he suggested that the standards of international relations could not and should not be applied to Russia's relations with the new independent states. In essence, the line between foreign and domestic does not begin with the "near abroad." Moreover, the outcome of this "transitional process," in Migranyan's view, was undecided; it could yield one or fifteen states.⁶

The loss of empire also challenges Russian self-perceptions of their superpower status. Although Russia lacks any attributes of a superpower other than an excessive and dangerous abundance of nuclear weapons, many such as Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev take great pains to argue that "Russia remains a superpower" with whom the world should reckon with and respect.⁷ The push by President Yeltsin to include Russia in the G-7 as well as demands for a role on determining NATO expansion are further demonstrations of the Russian desire to articulate and establish its great power status in the international community.

The natural extension of this feeling of humiliation and loss is the open questioning of and dissatisfaction with the present borders of Russia. The ill-defined nature of the borders through history has given rise to contemporary beliefs that Russia

⁵ Andranik Migranyan, "Near Abroad is Vital to Russia," *Nezvisimaya Gazeta in Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 26 no. 6-7, (March 9, 1994 and March 16, 1994).

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Andrei Kozyrev, "Don't Threaten Us," *New York Times*, (March 18, 1994). In addition this author interprets superpower to be a state that has the ability to influence nations throughout the world through military, economic and political persuasion. Although Russia has the material and human capital to hold superpower potential, it clearly does not and cannot influence economic or political regimes except on a regional basis or when nuclear weapons are involved.

encompasses much more than the boundaries of the present state. Former Vice-President Aleksandr Rutskoi's summed up this belief when he said, "The historical consciousness of Russians does not permit anyone to bring the borders of Russia in line with the Russia Federation."⁸ Although viewed as an extreme hard line conservative or "hurrah-patriot" because of his association with the failed October 1993 putsch, beliefs similar to his are shared by a wide-range of Russian political figures, including many prominent and former democrats.⁹

Included in this group of prominent democrats are numerous intellectuals closely associated with President Boris Yeltsin and the foreign policy establishment such as Sergei Stankevich and Andranik Migranyan. Although both stop short of Rutskoi's suggestion of an imperial revival, each advocate an internationally recognized "special role" for Russia in the "near abroad." Further they propose Russia seek to obtain a close integration with the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. Integration, in their view, must include a leading role for Moscow in shaping the foreign and economic policies of the newly independent states.¹⁰

⁸ See, William C. Bodie, *Moscow's "Near Abroad." Security Policy in Post-Soviet Europe*, (National Defense University, McNair Papers, 1993). p. 18.

⁹ Much care should be taken when ascribing to any Russian politician the label of democrat for the concept of democracy is neither well-established or understood in Russia. Moreover, many of these politicians who used democratic ideals and slogans in the effort to break free of Communist rule have shown disturbing signs of authoritarianism. Left or right in relation to politics are also extremely confusing terms in post-Communist states. This author will avoid them when at all possible. For this reference, right implies those extreme nationalists or ex-communists that argue for restoration of greater Russian state under an authoritarian regime.

¹⁰ For their views see, Andranik Migranyan, "Near Abroad is Vital to Russia," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 26 no. 6-7, (March 9, 1994 and

This starting point, of confused self-identity and dissatisfaction with the post-Soviet political sphere, is where Russia begins to craft its policy toward the new states of the former Union. Faced with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the growth of centrifugal tendencies in and around Russia, aided by the continued permeability of the state's borders, Moscow's policies increasingly resemble past efforts to stabilize the borders.

B. THE NATURE OF POROUS FRONTIERS TODAY

To Western observers, the idea that Russia, even in its weakened post-Soviet form, is vulnerable to outside invasion seems ludicrous. The sheer magnitude of the remaining Russian military and paramilitary forces combined with the weakness of the states surrounding Russia would appear to deter any state from even contemplating much less undertaking an invasion. In the Caucasus region, where this study is focused, the newly independent states have been embroiled in turmoil and conflict since emerging from Soviet rule. The neighboring states of Turkey and Iran are also immersed in their own internal ethnic and religious battles. In addition, these states, like the newly independent republics, are experiencing painful economic troubles. In spite of the weakness surrounding them, Russians however seem acutely aware of the weakness of their own state, almost to the point of paranoia.¹¹ Many of the threats Russia see on the

March 16, 1994).

¹¹ For example, discussion surrounding a potential North-South conflict is on the rise among Russian writers. In addition, the fear of an Islamic wave sweeping the region also receives wide-play. Even dismissing the most rabid debate such as that from Vladimir Zhirinovsky, many still see numerous potential conflicts penetrating Russia. See, Ednan Agayev, "Foreign Policy Aspects of Russia's Security Concept," *International Affairs*, (October

horizon are completely mythical yet there are very real fears that should not be lightly dismissed for its vulnerability to outside penetration is quite real. Nor should we dismiss those fears based we believe are based on paranoia without investigation.

Russia's present frontiers exhibit the same porous or permeable tendencies found through its history. Although Mongol/Tatar raiding parties are clearly a thing of the past, Russia's borders remain essentially open to the influx of ethnic and religious conflict and the outflow of capital, both human and financial. Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union as an external border left Russia without a demarcated international border and also without an in-place customs or border service. The porous nature of the border is reflected in the continued problem of non-Russian ethnic enclaves astride or crossing Russia's borders. In essence, the collapse of the Soviet Union, while it produced states for long suppressed ethno-nationalist groups, did little to resolve or clarify Russia's "persistent" inability to define its borders. Nor did the collapse of the Union give Russia the opportunity to escape the persistent factors of its history.

1. Border Vulnerability: The Contemporary Russian View

For Russians, the post-Soviet political landscape is full of instability and centrifugal tendencies. The most prominent and troublesome region for instability is Russia's border with the Caucasus. As Eugene Rumer observed, "Russia's southern frontier...is engulfed in interethnic, religious, and civil conflicts [to] include Georgia, [and] Abkhazia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh, the two Ossetias, and

1993): 3-5, Evgeniy Kozhokin, "Russian National Security Policy in the Changing International System," Unpublished Article. (November 1994) and Alexei G. Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," *International Security*, 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 5-43.

Chechnya."¹² In this region, Russia faces the very real prospects of these conflicts spilling over into Russia proper in the form of refugees, terrorism or open conflict. Moreover, ethno-nationalism, which is at the root of the crisis in Abkhazia, Ossetia, and Chechnya is finding a receptive audience among the non-ethnic Russians still within the Russian state in the Caucasus.¹³ Furthermore, Rumer correctly surmised the potential threat to Russia by noting that it remains in many ways just a "truncated empire...vulnerable to the same virus of nationalism and regionalism and desire for self-determination," that doomed the Soviet Empire.¹⁴

For Russia then, the nature of its border vulnerability can be separated into three over-lapping categories. Foremost among these threats to Russia is the potential for continued disintegration of the Russian state. Just as many Russian nationalists or proto-imperialists are unhappy with the break-up of the Soviet Union, many of the minority ethnic groups left within the Russian Federation are equally dissatisfied since they see the break-up as incomplete.¹⁵ The second threat is the potential spillover of conflict from the neighboring states into Russia. An adjunct to this is potential for a major flow of

¹² Eugene B. Rumer, *The Building Blocks of Russia's Future Military Doctrine*, (RAND, Santa Monica, CA., 1994).

¹³ Chechnya and North Ossetia are within Russia proper while Abkhazia and South Ossetia are in Georgia.

¹⁴ Eugene B. Rumer, *The Building Blocks of Russia's Future Military Doctrine*, (RAND, Santa Monica, CA., 1994). p. 13.

¹⁵ Not all nationalist are opposed to the breakup of the Soviet Union since many see it as divesting themselves of unproductive non-slavic colonial states that were a drain on the Great Russia people. See, Roman Szporluk, "Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism," *Problems of Communism*, x, no. x (July-August 1989): 15-35.

refugees into Russia escaping these conflicts. Last is the threat poised by the spread of ethnic nationalism and religious separatism into Russia from the new republics or from existing states such as Turkey or Iran.

Preventing the occurrence of the first of these threats, the continued disintegration of the Russian Federation, is at the core of Russia's foreign and security policy. The tendencies for separation or greater autonomy can be widely found across Russia's regions and administrative zones but the strongest pull for outright sovereignty is from the "ethnic" based republics, especially those of the North Caucasus region. There are twenty-one of these nominally ethnic based republics within the Russian Federation, which bear the name of the area's principal ethnic group, or "nation."¹⁶ In total, these republics account for twenty-eight percent of the land area of Russia and fifteen percent of the population.

In the complicated hierarchy of "nations" in the former Soviet Union, these republics were considered autonomous republics but not the quasi-sovereign equivalents of the fifteen Union republics. Lacking this claim to sovereignty at the Soviet Union's demise, these republics, not always of their own desires, were left within the Russian Federation. While not all have been in a position to seek independence, nearly all

¹⁶ The predominance of the indigenous nationality within the ethnic republic varies widely, in many, Russians now form the largest if not the majority ethnic group. Several reasons account for this development. Among these are the deportation of many these groups during the Stalin period with the concurrent high rates of mortality. Also in the Soviet period the borders were purposefully demarcated to exclude and divide many of these ethnic group. Often area associated with another ethnic nationality would be encompassed into a national homeland instead. Kremlin map-makers recognized the value of divide and conquer. Lastly, industrialization drew mostly Russians into the new urban areas of these republics.

continue to maneuver for greater autonomy from Moscow.¹⁷

Although these republics were unable to separate from Russia, the collapse of the Soviet Union did produce a dramatic change in the political geography, giving these entities new leverage to use against the Moscow center. Under the Soviet Union, none of the seven Caucasian republics were located on an international border; however in post-Soviet Russia, five now border an independent state. This new border arrangement, combined with traditional political, cultural and commercial ties on the opposite side has opened new prospects for cross border activities with little interference or control from Moscow.

Equally as significant, for both Moscow and the local republics is the relative predominance of ethnically non-Russian peoples. In all but one of the seven Caucasus republics, ethnic Russians are an absolute minority.¹⁸ Moreover, since the early 1980's, the ratio of ethnic Russians within the population has been declining due to the higher birthrates among indigenous groups.¹⁹ More recently, the migration of Russians out of these republics has further reduced both the absolute number and the relative percentage

¹⁷ Ann Sheehy, "Russia's Republics: A Threat to Its Territorial Integrity?" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2 no. 20 (May 14, 1993): 34-40. For organization of the Soviet Union's Republic structure see, Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda, *Soviet Disunion, A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR*, (Free Press, New York, 1990).

¹⁸ *Russia: An Economic Profile*, (United States Government Publication, Washington D.C., 1994).

¹⁹ Galina Soldatova and Irina Dement'eva, "Russians in the North Caucasian Republics," in Vladimir Shlapentokh, Munir Sendich and Emil Payin, ed., *The New Russian Diaspora: Russian Minorities in the former Soviet Republics*, (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk NY, 1994). p. 123-124.

of ethnic Russians.²⁰

In the past, Russians in the Caucasus were normally found in the industrialized urban areas where they constituted the majority of skilled workers, managers, bureaucrats and party officials. The rise of the indigenous population within the republics is also producing a growing urbanized middle class among the titular nationality. As such, even in previous Russian enclaves, the industrialized cities, the indigenous population is also on the rise.²¹

For Russia, the North Caucasus republics appear increasingly non-Russian, separated from central control and susceptible to foreign ideas, especially ethno-nationalism and political Islam. President Yeltsin summed up this feeling in April, 1993 by saying, "It is no secret that the country is gripped by a feeling of anxiety about [the territorial] integrity of the Russian state. Will it share the same fate as the USSR?"²² Unlike the Union republics whose independence Russia was forced to accept as a *fait accompli*, Moscow is determined to prevent any further splintering of the federation.

To this end, in articulating a security policy for Russia, Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, the former Secretary of the Russian Federation Security Council, said "ensuring state sovereignty and territory and preventing the breakup of the Russian Federation," is the principle task of Russia's security policy.²³ Not surprisingly, this holds a higher place

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *Rossiiskie vesti*, April 30, 1993.

²³ Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, "A Security Concept for Russia," *International Affairs*, x, no. x (October 1993): 10-19.

than defense against external threats. Shaposhnikov also places ensuring the stability of the state and maintaining the constitutional system above external threats.²⁴ Maintenance of the constitution has been one of the prime justifications for military operations in Chechnya.

The new military doctrine also recognizes internal instability as one of, if not the main, threats to Russia's security. Specifically, the document states Russian military force will be used to prevent the "the illegal activity of nationalist, secessionist and other organizations designed to destabilize the internal situation in the Russian Federation."²⁵

In this frame of analysis, the threat to Russia's frontiers is from the potential spillover of fighting or refugees from the many ongoing conflicts in the new Trans-Caucasus states. Even before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the complex web of ethnic and religious affiliations in the Caucasus had led to separatist movements, political recriminations, economic blackmail and open hostilities. None of the three new nations, Armenia, Azerbaijan or Georgia has been free of conflict. More importantly, Georgia and Azerbaijan have seen open civil war that produced the collapse of the national government.

Russian commentators and politicians view the Caucasus area as a new "arc of

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Charles Dick, "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation," *Jane's Intelligence Review Special Report*, no. 1, January 1994. The doctrine was initially published in *Voennaya mysl* (special issue), May 1992. A translated version appears in Dick, *Jane's Intelligence Review Special Report*. For commentaries or interpretations of this document see also, James F. Holcomb and Michael M. Ball, *Russia's New Doctrine: Two Views*, (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. 1994) and Mary C. FitzGerald, "Chief of Russia's General Staff Academy Speaks Out on Moscow's New Military Doctrine," *Orbis*, 37, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 281-288.

crisis" that threatens to spread its dangerous mix of ethnic-religious conflict into the aforementioned Russian republics.²⁶ Alexei Arbatov wrote in 1994 that Russia was faced with "new strategic surroundings" that included southwestern neighbors that were "marked by a high degree of internal instability [and] very much open to influence from outside."²⁷

This instability among its southern neighbors is seen as a potential catalyst for a larger and more dangerous war. Without specifying possible belligerent, Ednan Agayev, warned that tensions in these areas "may explode into armed conflicts and local wars threatening to develop into a larger collision."²⁸ The newly adopted military doctrine of the Russian Armed forces echoes Agayev. In identifying external threats, the doctrine sees armed conflicts "in the direct proximity of the Russian borders," as one of the principal threats to the nation's security.²⁹

The last threat to Russia's borders is the potential penetration of the Caucasus region by outside influences that would promote such ideas as religious based or ethno-nationalist based political authority. One of these individuals who see such a scenario as realistic is the former Director of the Federal Security Service (FSC) Sergei Stepashin.

²⁶ Sergei Stankevich, "Russia In Search of Itself," *The National Interest*, 28 (Summer 1992): 47-55.

²⁷ Alexei G. Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," *International Security*, 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 5-43.

²⁸ Ednan Agayev, "Foreign Policy Aspects of Russia's Security Concept," *International Affairs*, (October 1993): 3-5.

²⁹ Charles Dick, "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation," *Jane's Intelligence Review Special Report*, no. 1, January 1994.

As a Duma member in 1992, Stepashin accused Turkey of attempting to create, with United States and British assistance, a "Pan-Turkic Empire" that would be constructed from the Muslims of the North Caucasus and Volga region.³⁰ In only a slightly different vein, Alexei Arbatov saw the states of Georgia and Armenia backed by Russia, as the hedge for the "containment of Muslim fundamentalism and separatism."³¹ In either view, the outcome is essentially the same: foreign influence and conflict in the Caucasus could, as Arbatov suggests, "spread into Tatarstan and Bashkortastan, virtually splitting Russia along the Volga."³²

Presidential advisor, Andranik Migranyan envisioned an even more apocalyptic scenario in which the Caucasus region would be torn apart by a three way conflict between Turkey, Iran and Russia. In this scenario, Turkey acts as the proxy of the west while Iran is the vanguard of a united Islamic fundamentalist movement. Russia, by contrast, in Migranyan's view is merely defending its national interest and survival.³³

Like the previous threats, Russia's military doctrine is constructed in the effort to deter or neutralize the encroachment of outside powers. In discussing threats, the doctrine addresses this situation both directly and indirectly. Directly, it warns that "deployment of foreign troops on the territory of states adjacent to the Russian

³⁰ Mark Smith, *Pax Russica: Russia's Monroe Doctrine*, (The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies). p. 10.

³¹ Arbatov, p. 34.

³² *ibid.*

³³ Migranyan, p. 10.

Federation" constitute a threat and would be met with a Russian response.³⁴ It also warned that support for or training of guerrilla organizations for use against Russia or its neighboring states constituted a similar threat and would meet with a similar response.³⁵ Indirectly, it linked an increase in the capabilities of forces along its borders as a threat to its military security and political stability.

The three threat categories (or scenarios) clearly demonstrate both the continued vulnerability of Russia's frontiers as well as its recognition of these factors. Beyond these categories however, the permeability of Russia's frontiers are further affected by the same determinants outlined in Chapter II. The next section outlines the influence of these factors on the three previous categories of threats.

2. Porous Frontiers: Contributing Factors

In Chapter II, this thesis defined porous frontiers as continuing vulnerability of the borders to outside invasion. The potential for invasion rested on the synergistic effect produced by the following four conditions, (1) an inability to defend the borders, (2) limited state authority, (3) uncontrolled flight or movement of population and (4) a multi-ethnic frontier area. As they have throughout Russian history, these factors contribute to create borders vulnerable to foreign intervention. While it is the combination of these factors that produces the vulnerability of the frontier, to understand them and to grasp their role, each will be examined in turn.

Of these contributing elements, the inability to defend its borders has been the

³⁴ Dick, p. 7.

³⁵ *ibid.*

factor most acutely felt and appreciated by Russian policy makers. For seventy years, the Soviet Union created a vast network of military, para-military and custom organizations to control the flow of cross-border traffic and to deter and defeat military invasion. The collapse of the Soviet Union removed these far reaching controls over the Empire's borders. Not only did the mechanism of control break up as individual republics began to assert sovereign ownership of these assets, the Russia Federation's administrative border with the rest of the empire became, instantaneously, an international border. This transformation meant Russia began with no assets in place to control its own borders, control not just from a military and authoritarian perspective but in even the minimalist sense of regulating commerce and the flow of travelers, legal, illegal or refugee.

The lack of a border regime, either customs or defensive, forms a large part of Russia's claim that it is without borders. It is this point that Foreign Minister Kozyrev stressed in an interview by saying, "we do not have borders."³⁶ Kozyrev went on to stress that these administrative lines "were never defined as interstate borders."³⁷ This lack of borders is also at the root of Colonel-General Andrei Nikolayev's, the head of the Border Forces, assertion that Russia's defense potential was "down by substantial margin."³⁸

This inability to defend or control its borders is clearly visible in inadequate customs controls which have resulted in the development of a large underground

³⁶ Therese Raphael, Claudia Rosett, and Suzanne Crow, "An Interview with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 3 no. 28 (July 15, 1994): 36-42.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Andrei Nikolayev, "Military Aspects of Russia's Security," *International Affairs*, 40, no. 10 (October 1993): 6-9.

economy characterized by the import and export of goods and capitals. Much of this trade is beneficial in that it promotes and expands the private economy generating both cash, jobs and the availability of higher quality western products. Much more damaging is the trade in illegal goods such as weapons and drugs. Even more dangerous is the possibility that this includes the export of technical knowledge in the production of weapons, to include weapons of mass destruction.

Russia's new-found openness has allowed for a drastic growth in the number of travelers entering and leaving Russia and with it of course, new opportunities for smuggling. Government press releases suggest that up to 74 million persons entered or left Russia in 1994 compared to less than 1.2 million in the waning days of the Soviet Union.³⁹ While the accuracy of these figures is likely suspect, the known cases of nuclear smuggling clearly indicate Russia has little control over the inflow or outflow of material, persons or capital.

To date, most of the smuggling has been low-grade or useless atomic material passed off as more expensive fissionable material.⁴⁰ As of yet, no reliable reports of weapons grade material smuggling have been received and the generally accepted view in the West is that nuclear smuggling of material or individuals with technical know-how to produce atomic weapons has not occurred.

³⁹ *Rossiiskie Vesti*, February 7, 1995, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Various news accounts detail the discovery of this trade in low-grade radioactive material. See, Spurgeon M. Keeny, Jr., "Nuclear Smugglers Spark Worries over Russian Safeguards," *Arms Control Today*, 24, September 1994. William J. Broad, "Russians Suspect Three Sites as Source of Seized A-Fuel," *The New York Times*, August 19, 1994, p. A11. Steve Coll, "Stole Plutonium Tied to Arms Labs," *The Washington Post*, August 17, 1994, p. A1.

The smuggling or sale of conventional weapons is, however, drastically different. In the case of small arms, artillery and even tanks, buyers with money can obtain a wide variety of armaments. In the Caucasus, Central Asia and the former East Germany, Russian officers routinely supplemented their meager pay by selling off excess stock of arms.⁴¹ Much of the Soviet arsenal has found its way to the conflicts along Russia's rim, to include the arming of Chechen fighters.⁴²

Accompanying this breakdown of customs controls and the export of arms is the loss of central control over the provincial republics. The disintegration of the structures of power following the coup attempt against Gorbachev in August 1991, set off a widespread move to gain power at the expense of the rapidly collapsing center.⁴³ In a bid to assume power, Yeltsin skillfully exploited Russia's control over financial mechanisms and tax revenues to break Gorbachev's hold on the government.⁴⁴ After the Soviet Union's collapse, the ethnic republics within the Russian Federation followed Yeltsin's precedent in their maneuver for sovereignty and began to withhold tax revenues from the now Russian center in order to claim a greater share of the industrial and raw material

⁴¹ Christopher J. Ulrich, "The Growth of Crime in Russia and the Baltic Region," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 3, no. 23, June 10, 1994. See also, Neela Banerjee, "The Wall Street Journal."

⁴² James Sherr, "The Conflict in Chechnya," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 6, no. 12, December 1994. p. 558.

⁴³ John B. Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993). p. 266- 271.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

output produced within their republic.⁴⁵ The republics also took advantage of the disarray in Moscow caused by the dispute between Yeltsin and Parliament over constitutional powers to further increase their own power position.⁴⁶

The shift in power from the center to the republics also resulted in the first large scale inter-ethnic fighting within the Russian Federation when Ossetians fought with the Ingush for control of disputed lands.⁴⁷ The fighting was precipitated when Dzhokar Dudayev, the President of Chechnya, declared Chechen independence from Russia. In this move, Dudayev split from the Ingush section of the Chechno-Ingushetia republic.⁴⁸ This action set off the fight between the Ossetians and the Ingush, fighting Moscow could do little to stop, thus underscoring the limits of the central government's power in the Caucasus.

Moreover, Dudayev's declaration of independence placed Yeltsin in a precarious position. The independence of one of the ethnic republics was clearly a danger, but so was direct action to reclaim it. In 1992, Yeltsin's position was too weak to undertake action without serious risk of parliamentary moves to block it as well as the likelihood of more republics opting for separation. Yeltsin was forced to make a series of economic and political concessions to the republics in order to gain their signature on a Federation

⁴⁵ Sheehy, *Russia's Republics*, p. 37.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* For details of the President-Parliament struggles see, Dominic Gualtieri, "Russian Parliament Renews Power Struggle with Yeltsin," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2, no. 32, August 13, 1993.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Sherr, p. 558.

treaty.⁴⁹ In this manner, Yeltsin was able to hold Russia together while he fought to increase Presidential authority.

The concessions made by the embattled center have allowed for a wide range of local autonomy and control. The extent of this control varies from the self-proclaimed sovereign Tatarstan, which wields huge leverage over its oil production but does not claim independence to the breakaway Chechnya republic, which declared independence following the coup in 1991.

The next of the complicating factors is the uncontrolled migration and refugee movement of peoples into the Russian Federation. Starting in the late 1980's, the growing national awareness of the Union republics and the resulting inter-ethnic tensions with Russians led to a sharp growth in the out-migration of ethnic Russians. In addition, Russian migration to these republics fell drastically. Demographic studies of migration estimate that the movement of Russian speakers to the Russian Federation grew by 200 percent between 1989 and 1990.⁵⁰ The bulk of these were ethnic Russians.

The collapse of the Soviet Union gave further impetus for migration. Ethnic Russians in the Caucasus were among those mostly likely to leave and return to the federation.⁵¹ Interviews by the All-Union Center for the Study of Public Opinion of refugees in Russia show that a principal concern of these refugees was ethnic fighting

⁴⁹ Sheehy, p. 37-38.

⁵⁰ Aleksandr Susokolov, "Russian Refugees and Migrants in Russia," in Vladimir Shlapentokh, Munir Sendich and Emil Payin, ed., *The New Russian Diaspora: Russian Minorities in the former Soviet Republics*, (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk NY, 1994). p. 184.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

and anti-Russian sentiment.⁵²

Since the collapse of the Union, well-documented figures accounting for the number of refugees or migrants within Russia has declined, owing in part to lack of governmental mechanisms for counting or controlling movement. Nonetheless, official estimates suggest that by the end of 1992 nearly one million refugees entered Russia, principally from Tajikistan and Azerbaijan as well as from other states in the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁵³ What is most remarkable about the large numbers of ethnic Russians returning from the Caucasus is that the overall number of Russians there is relatively small, especially in comparison to Ukraine, the Baltics and Kazakstan.⁵⁴

Migration from abroad is not the only form of movement within Russia. The outbreak of fighting in the Chechno-Ingush republic in early 1992 has also produced a mass exodus of Ingush refugees. Much of the Ingush inhabited areas had been subsumed by Ossetia refugees fleeing fighting in Georgia or turmoil in Ingushetia. Russians in the North Caucasus are also leaving in large numbers for predominately ethnic Russian areas within the federation. This movement is most pronounced among

⁵² Lev Gudkov, "The Structure and Character of Migration of Russians from the Former Republics of the USSR," in Vladimir Shlapentokh, Munir Sendich and Emil Payin, ed., *The New Russian Diaspora: Russian Minorities in the former Soviet Republics*, (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk NY, 1994). p. 178-182.

⁵³ Denis Volkov, "The Long Road from the Near Abroad," *New Times International*, no. 52, December 1993. p. 17.

⁵⁴ See, "Russians abroad: pawns or knights?" *The Economist*, (July 10, 1993): 39-40. And, Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia, the Politics of Upheaval*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994).

Russians in Chechnya.⁵⁵ Even before the outbreak of major hostilities in December 1994, nearly 40 percent of the 293 thousand Russians in Chechnya wanted to leave because of rising ethnic tensions.⁵⁶ The exodus of both Russians and Chechens since the start of fighting has dramatically increased with the U.N High Commissioner for Refugees estimating at least 400 thousand persons have fled their homes.⁵⁷ Since Grozny, the scene of the heaviest fighting, had a large Russian population, it can be expected that many of these refugees are ethnic Russians.

The potential burden for Russia of millions of refugees and migrants is staggering. The lack of a functioning social safety net makes difficult for refugees to be gradually or successfully absorbed into the Russian economy. The agitation for government assistance or for the recovery of property lost during flight could generate pressures for both a tougher line toward foreign states and federal republics.

The last of the factors contributing to porous frontiers is the continuing multi-ethnic nature of Russia's frontiers. As previously discussed, the population of the North Caucasus area of the Russian Federation is predominately non-Russian. No repetition of the demographic facts of this area should be necessary here. Instead, it must be noted that as with the other contributing factors to porous frontiers, a multi-ethnic frontier area works to confuse the boundaries of the state, reduce state control and produce a desire for local autonomy.

⁵⁵ Gudkov, p. 182.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ "Russian Troops Bombard Towns in Chechnya," *The New York Times*, February 2, 1995, p. A5.

C. RUSSIA'S RESPONSE: DEALING WITH POROUS FRONTIERS

The proposal that porous frontiers affect and shape Russian foreign and security policy rests on two interlocking points. The first of these is the demonstration that porous frontiers exist and that these uncontrolled borders pose or, at least from the Russian perspective, is believed to pose a threat to national sovereignty. The second of these points is perhaps the more critical aspect: Russian policy is actually designed to respond to and neutralize the effects of porous borders. In examining the early years of the Muscovy state, this author argued that its rulers sought to neutralize its porous frontiers by expanding outward. This expansion involved a mixture of political arrangements to create vassal states, which were later absorbed into the empire, or the outright conquest of adjacent lands. This pattern was frequently replicated throughout Russian history.

The post-Soviet Russia state's efforts to deal with porous frontiers parallel these past efforts to a remarkable degree. Once again, Russia is attempting to mitigate the effects and dangers of porous frontiers by instituting the whole gamut of political, economic and military action described in chapter II. Specifically, Moscow has articulated a policy whose aim is to ensure the stability of the Russian borders and the surrounding states. Unstated in this policy are the conditions that Moscow attaches to the term stability. Essentially, it involves stability of relations with Russia, in which Moscow wields much influence in the shaping of its neighbors security policies. This arrangement is akin to the vassalage arrangements previously mentioned.

The balance of this chapter will show that Moscow's foreign policy efforts to

ensure border stability consist of three general methods; (1) support for or the creation of pro-Moscow regimes in neighboring states, (2) the use of Russian peacekeeping forces to stabilize conflict and (3) preventing outside powers from obtaining political or economic influence in the "near abroad."

1. The Importance of Pro-Moscow Regimes

In its efforts to prevent the spread of ethno-nationalism and religious separatism to the North Caucasus republics in the Russian Federation, Moscow has sought to create compliant and cooperative regimes along its southern frontier. This aim is vastly more important than the publicly announced goal of promoting stability or ensuring a regional balance of power. Rather Russia, fearing the spread of infectious ideas to the North Caucasus through the nationalistic regimes in Georgia and Azerbaijan has sought to promote a change in these governments to regimes more compliant and agreeable to Moscow's interests. Stability in fact has often been undermined in order to be rid of a potentially damaging and dangerous nationalistic governments.

In looking at Russian involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the Georgian Civil War, it is possible to see a pattern of Russian interference and promotion of the conflict in order to gain leverage or undo an anti-Russian government and replace it with a more subservient regime. Russia, through covert and overt means supported opposition groups in both these nations in order to gain political leverage. The measure of success for Russia was the willingness of the new regime to agree to Russia's principal demands to join the CIS, establish joint border control regimes that use the Soviet Union's old borders as Russian borders and cooperation to keep outside powers from

gaining influence in the region.

In the days following the demise of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin and his entourage hoped to construct a new union that would ease the transition away from the Communist state and ensure among other things, the stability of the Russian Federation. The hopes by Russia that the Commonwealth of Independent States would also form the basis of a new union were quickly dashed when Ukraine clearly articulated its desire for unencumbered independence.⁵⁸ In the Caucasus, Georgia remained outside the Commonwealth fold and Azerbaijan soon left, complicating Russia's efforts to continue Soviet era controls on military forces, economic integration, customs and borders controls.

Within the first year of the CIS's existence, it was clear to Moscow that the organization was not accomplishing Russia's goals of maintaining the "economic and strategic sphere" of the former Soviet Union. In spite of the hundreds of agreements on economic, political and military cooperation, little was actually achieved within the CIS framework. Increasingly, Moscow was turning to bilateral agreements to ensure continued influence. As Western observers noted, the record of the CIS as an organization to resolve economic and political problems was an exceptionally weak one.⁵⁹ In addition, in Moscow's view, it failed to arrest the centrifugal forces that drove

⁵⁸ For details of the politics of the CIS initial year see, Ann Sheehy, "The CIS: A Shaky Edifice," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2 no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 37-40.

⁵⁹ See Suzanne Crow, "Russia Promotes the CIS as an International Organization," *RFE/RL Research Report*, no. 11, 18 March 1993. And, Martha Brill Olcott, "Russia's Place in the CIS," *Current History*, October 1993. And, Ann Sheehy, "The CIS: A Shaky Edifice," *RFE/RL Research Report*, no. 1, 1 January 1993.

the old empire apart and reduced Russian influence throughout the area. In the rise of state militaries outside of the CIS framework occurring everywhere except in the Central Asian states, and the clamor by these new states for both Western intervention and security guarantees, Russia saw its role as a great power being eroded. Moreover, the fears of continued disintegration, this time within the Russian federation, began to increase.⁶⁰

Unable to use the CIS as a lever to advance its policies, many within the President's circle of advisors began to argue for a more aggressive foreign policy which advanced Russian national interests. Much of this debate was couched in terms of ending Russia's subservient or junior partner relationship with the West in favor of a foreign policy that promoted Russian national interests.⁶¹ Instead of abandoning the CIS, Russia moved to use the Commonwealth as a legalizing mechanism to promote its interests. Russia began to champion the use of the CIS to ensure stability in the region while it simultaneously provided military support to opposition groups to destabilize Georgia and Azerbaijan.

In July of 1992, after Georgia and Azerbaijan refused to join the CIS, seeing it as veiled attempts by Moscow to reestablish its hegemony over the former Soviet Union, opposition groups in each nation launched major attacks. In Georgia, the minority

⁶⁰ See Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, "A Security Concept for Russia," *International Affairs*, (Moscow), October 1993.

⁶¹ Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "Russia's 'Monroe Doctrine' Peacekeeping, Peacemaking or Imperial Outreach?" in Maureen Appel Molot and Harald von Riekhoff, eds. *Canada Among Nations 1994-1995*, (Charleton University Press, 1994).

Abkhaz peoples, declared their region independence setting off a civil war splitting the nation. In the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, Armenians also launched an offensive designed to open a land corridor between the oblast and Armenia. In both cases, Russian military units were suspected of providing arms and equipment to assist the opposition movements.⁶² Although Russian military equipment was captured, to include a downed fighter aircraft, senior Russian military and political leaders denied the Russian military was involved in the conflict. Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev instead claimed that these forces were not really Russian at all, but former Soviet forces and their actions could not be considered as sanctioned by Moscow.⁶³

For nearly two years the Abkazians, a minority within their own republic were able to keep the Georgian military forces at bay. Russian assistance enabled the rebel group to drive the Georgians out of Abkhaz in late 1993.⁶⁴ In addition, the Russians were suspected of providing support to ousted Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia in his bid to overthrow Eduard Shevardnadze. The former Soviet Foreign Minister, Shevardnadze, had resisted Russia's efforts to include Georgia in the CIS defense and border agreements. Pressured by both the Abkhaz forces and Gamsakhurdia,

⁶² Thomas Goltz, "The Hidden Russian Hand," *Foreign Policy*, no. 92 (Fall 1993): 92-116. See also, Desik Urigasivili, "Shevardnadze Levels Accusations Against Russia and Tries to Avoid Civil War," in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 45, no. 39, October 27, 1993.

⁶³ Therese Raphael, Claudia Rosett, and Suzanne Crow, "An Interview with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 3 no. 28 (July 15, 1994): 36-42.

⁶⁴ Fiona Hill and Pamela Jewett, *Back in the USSR, Russia's Intervention in the Internal Affairs of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia*. (Harvard University Ethnic Conflict Project, 1994). p. 45.

Shevardnadze was forced to concede to Russian demands in exchange for support. The cost to Georgia was continued Russian access to Black Sea naval bases, control over key military facilities, control over railroads and pipelines through Georgia and a commitment by Georgia to join the CIS.⁶⁵

A similar pattern of NKAO Armenian advances is paralleled by Azerbaijan efforts to resist Russian demands for broader cooperation within the CIS rubric. One day after Baku refused to sign the CIS Mutual Security Pact, which would have allowed for the continued presence of Russian forces in Azerbaijan, NKAO Armenians launched an attack to open a land corridor to Armenia.⁶⁶ The successful attack enabled land resupply between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, thus defeating any Azeri effort to blockade the Armenian enclave. More importantly, it enabled the Karabakh Armenians to defeat repeated counter-attacks by Baku.

The democratically elected President of Azerbaijan, Abulfaz Elchibey, was unable to make good on his pledge to regain control of the oblast. Faced with continued battlefield defeats, Elchibey's domestic support was fading. In June 1993, Elchibey's government collapsed during a coup led by an independent military commander Surat Guseinov.⁶⁷ Guseinov was reported to have considerable Russian contacts, to include links with Russian military units in Azerbaijan. Press accounts suggest Guseinov was assisted in the coup attempt by departing Russian forces that handed over weapons and

⁶⁵ *ibid*, p. 46.

⁶⁶ *ibid*, p.10.

⁶⁷ *ibid*, See also Goltz.

ammunition. The coup enabled former Azerbaijani KGB director, Geidar Aliyev, to seize power.

A new Karabakh offensive in August 1993 in which the Armenian forces handily defeated the Azeri forces and pushed both south and east of the oblast forced Aliyev to turn to Moscow for assistance to stem the advance. In exchange for a commitment to join the CIS, basing rights in Azerbaijan for Russian military units and concessionary oil agreements, Azerbaijan was able to launch an offensive to regain lost territory. The success of the offensive turned on newly received Russian armor, artillery and helicopter gunships.⁶⁸

2. Interventionist Peacekeeping

While actively undermining the stability of its southern neighbors, Russia demanded it be granted, by the international community, wide-ranging powers to settle conflicts along its periphery. Throughout 1993, senior Russian officials prepared the groundwork for Russian military intervention in neighboring republics under the guise of peacekeeping. President Yeltsin began the efforts in an address to the Civic Union in February when he claimed Russia had

a vital interest in the cessation of all armed conflicts on the territory of the former USSR. Moreover, the international community is increasingly coming to realize our country's special responsibility in this difficult matter. I believe the time has come for authoritative international organizations, to include the United Nations, to grant Russia special powers as guarantor of peace and stability in this region.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *ibid*, p. 15.

⁶⁹ *ITAR-TASS*, 1 March 1993.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov at the United Nations further outlined this argument by claiming the action was needed to combat "aggressive nationalism," the "clashing of state sovereignty with countries rights of self-determination," "economic breakdown between the regions," and "the threat of nuclear proliferation."⁷⁰

As part of this effort, Russia promoted the CIS as an international organization, equivalent to NATO or the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The CIS, in Moscow's view was the ideal organization to undertake peacekeeping operations in the Caucasus. Retroactively, it applied the CIS peacekeeping stamp to ongoing operations in Tajikistan and Moldova. Moves in Azerbaijan and Georgia were also labelled as peacekeeping operations.

In order to legitimize and institutionalize its peacekeeping in the Caucasus, Russia sought legal structures to support its moves. It acquired observer status for the CIS at the UN and the second was to have the UN officially adopt the policy of using regional associations as the lead for peacekeeping operations.⁷¹ In addition, Moscow also moved to establish the legal basis for peacekeeping operations within the CIS framework. Russia consistently advocated the addition of peacekeeping duties to the CIS collective security agreement. That only six states initialed Moscow's proposal and that it has yet to be fully ratified by these states has not stopped Colonel-General Andrei Nikolayev,

⁷⁰ Suzanne Crow, "Russia Asserts Its Strategic Agenda," *RFE/FE Research Report*, no. 50, 17 December 1993.

⁷¹ Suzanne Crow, "Russia Promotes the CIS as an International Organization," *RFE/RL Research Report*, no. 11, 18 March 1994.

Commander of the Border Troops, from speaking of the "universal acceptance" of Russia's role as peacekeeper in the former Soviet Union.⁷²

More ominously, Russian political and military leaders began to advocate a new reason for these peacekeeping adventures, the need to maintain Russia's influence in the region. A little over a year after he accused the military of fomenting ethnic tension and political instability, Foreign Minister Kozyrev stated peacekeeping was a means to maintain Russian influence in the region.⁷³ Kozyrev said Russia was interested in using peacekeeping forces in order to prevent "losing geopolitical positions [in the near abroad] that took centuries to conquer."⁷⁴

3. Keeping Outside Powers Out

The last of Moscow policy methods to ensure its borders were to limit outside influence in the region. Principally, this meant keeping Turkey and Iran from gaining inroads into the Caucasus states or the Russian republics of the North Caucasus. In this effort, both the moves to destabilize the regimes and introduce peacekeepers have limited the opportunities for these nations to extend influence. In addition, Russia has publicly articulated a policy that seeks to exclude Western states from the region.

The aforementioned Russian military doctrine clearly identifies the build-up of

⁷² Andrei Nikolayev, "Military Aspects of Russia's Security," *International Affairs*, (Moscow), October 1993.

⁷³ Suzanne Crow, "Russia Promotes the CIS as an International Organization," *RFE/RL Research Report*, no. 11, 18 March 1994. For Koyzrev's warning see, *Izvestiya*, 1 July 1992, quoted in John Lough, "The Place of the 'Near Abroad' in Russian Foreign Policy," *RFE/RL Research Report*, no. 11, 12 March 1993.

⁷⁴ Suzanne Crow, "Russia Asserts Its Strategic Agenda," *RFE/RL Research Report*, no. 50, 17 December 1993.

forces along its borders and the deployment of foreign troops into neighboring states as an unacceptable change in the balance of power.⁷⁵ The introduction of foreign troops was caveated by saying it could be done in accordance with United Nations or other collective security agreement, such as the CSCE.⁷⁶ Russia however has consistently sought to prevent the introduction of foreign peacekeepers into the region. Kozyrev argued the U.N. was both unable and unwilling to conduct these operations and instead responsibility for these matters should be turned over to regional groupings like the CIS.⁷⁷

A similar tactic was tried with the CSCE in an effort to both prevent foreign peacekeepers from arriving in Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh but also to promote the use of the CIS instead.⁷⁸ By pushing the idea of Russian peacekeeping, Moscow essentially undermined the CSCE efforts, in mid-1993, when these moves appeared to be offering hope for success. In addition, the move undermined Turkey's influence in the region since it had intimately connected itself to the CSCE process.⁷⁹

4. Russian Action in Context of Porous Frontiers

The above-three methods that Russia has adopted all seek to mitigate its current

⁷⁵ Dick, p. 7.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Suzanne Crow, "Russia Asserts Its Strategic Agenda," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2, no. 50 (December 17, 1993): 1-8.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Fuller, "The Karabakh Mediation Process: Grachev Versus the CSCE?" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 3, no. 23 (June 10, 1994): 13-18.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

problems with porous frontiers. Some of the actions are plainly obvious. The incorporation of Georgia and Azerbaijan in addition to Armenia into the CIS defense and security arrangements places both the defense and the regulatory controls for Russia's borders back at the well-established Soviet Union demarcating line. It both pushes back outside influence and extends Russia control, albeit indirectly into neighboring states.

Less obvious, but no less important, are the gains from toppling nationalist regimes and incorporating their successors into the CIS. Fundamentally, it helps reverse the shift in the political geography wrought by the demise of the Soviet Union. For North Caucasus republics such as Chechnya, although it continues to border an international state, these neighboring states are now host to a large Russian military presence. In addition, they are closely tied economically to Moscow. Their leverage to assist Chechen resistance has been severely reduced by Russian diplomatic, military and political actions. Also reduced is the ideological attraction of a successful democratic nationalist state since the independent-minded nationalists that sought to distance themselves from Russia have fallen from power. While nationalist sentiment exists, it is be tempered by the real fears of a reassertion of Moscow's military and political influence. If the fundamental problem of porous frontiers is coming to grips with the power on the opposite side as the noted historian Cyril Black suggests, then Russia's current policy is clearly designed to confront this problem.

IV. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

Throughout its history, Russia's ability to compete with other nations in a wide-range of diplomatic, political and military activities has been hampered by a position of general economic inferiority.¹ These problems were manifested in an inability to support and supply standing armies, develop and incorporate advance military technology and compete militarily or politically against the United States during the Cold War. The nature of these inferiorities has not been constant, but instead has evolved over time in the same manner in which the measures of economic strength and vitality have evolved. The principal constant, however, is Russia's inability to overcome its inferiorities or to use the change in the structure of the world's economy to improve its economic standing.

The dramatic collapse of the Soviet Union and the intended turn to a free market economy has not changed the fundamentally weak economic position of Russia. Seventy years of a command economy, which ignored all aspects of economic efficiency, did little but institutionalize the structural inefficiencies of economic life. In spite of its wealth of natural resources and relatively skilled work force, Russia remains fundamentally inferior to the West, as well as many of the world's emerging market economies.

The effect of these inferiorities on Russia have been dramatic in both the domestic economic sphere as well as in foreign policy. Abroad, Russia's ability to influence neighbors and shape events through economic measures is extremely limited. As a senior member of Russia's Foreign Ministry said, Russia is ill-prepared for a world where

¹ Alfred J. Rieber, "Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretive Essay," in Hugh Ragsdale, ed., *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge).

economic, not military power, is a key component of ensuring stability.² Because of its weak economic position, Russia fears it will lose its dominant political role in the area of the former Soviet Union. More importantly for Moscow, the draw of natural resources in the Caucasus and Central Asia could prove to be a more desirable place for foreign investment than Russia. To overcome this inferior position, Russia has marshalled its political and military clout in concert with its favorable geographic position to achieve control over the economic area of the former Soviet Union.

While no exact links can be drawn between policies based on economic interests and those based on a wider range of political, social and cultural concerns, the economic influence on policy development is both present and identifiable. Before examining what these influences are and how they shape policy, an understanding of this author's hypothesis is in order. This argument proposes that Russia seeks to extend a dominant political influence on its neighboring states in an effort to overcome economic disadvantages it would suffer in open and fair competition. Moreover, the extension of its influence over its neighbors is also designed to mitigate the effects of inferiority within its own economy. Specifically, because of the collapse of the Russian economy, to include the decline of its primary source of hard currency, oil and gas exports, Russia is seeking to use political and military leverage to gain an advantageous position in the economies of its neighboring states to guarantee new sources of revenue and technology. The targeted sector, which promises the greatest returns is the energy industry. For Russia, the gains of

² Ednan Agayev, "Foreign Policy Aspects of Russia's Security Concept," *International Affairs*, (October 1993): 3-5.

controlling this sector could offset the problems of the domestic economy.

As such, this author suggests, Russian foreign policy, in relation to its nearest neighbors is closely intertwined with economic interests and motivations. More importantly, these interests, which are aimed at obtaining and securing a favorable economic position for Russia, are motivated by the failure of the Russian economy. Furthermore, to demonstrate this link, this chapter will focus on Russian economic interests and activities in the Caucasus. To develop this hypothesis, this paper will examine two key questions. The first of these is, what is the nature of Russian economic inferiority? Second, how does this inferiority shape foreign and security policy?

A. CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN ECONOMIC INFERIORITY

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia, with its abundant natural resources combined with a well-educated and low cost work force, appeared to have a potentially promising economic future after the remnants of a centrally planned economy were disassembled. This, of course, is not meant to underestimate the truly significant economic problems ranging from inefficient workers and workplace to massive environmental damage. Nonetheless, Russia's reserves in oil, gas, minerals and precious metals drew, from the start, a host of Western firms eager to invest, develop and produce in Russia.³ Originally, natural resources, as they had through the 1980's, promised significant export revenue earnings and substantial foreign investment in the domestic

³ For example, see *Russia Country Study*, (World Bank, Washington D.C., 1993). The World Bank estimated with the expected foreign investment in the energy sector, output would increase steadily after reaching a low in 1992. The expected growth was to be on the order of 100 percent (in constant dollar sales) within five years. In actuality, energy production has declined steadily since 1988 and no increases are projected in the near to mid-term.

Russian infrastructure. The potential for the transition of high technology defense firms to dual use or consumer products firms was also seen as a potentially lucrative possibility. The effects of the transition to a free market economy however have been dismal. Since 1991, Russian Gross Domestic Production (GDP) has fallen on average of twenty percent per year.⁴ More importantly, the structural, managerial and technical inefficiencies that led to a declining Soviet economy have changed little in Russia in spite of the massive privatization and international aid program designed to move the country toward a free market.⁵

The nature of these inferiorities, in relation to the West, are numerous and affect all aspects of the economy. The fundamental reorientation from a command to free market economy has proven to be difficult for workers and managers unaccustomed to meeting the demands of the consumer.⁶ Additionally, the low state of repair of the economic infrastructure of all industries and the orientation toward quantity not quality

⁴ Exact data on Russian domestic production although improving is still far from Western standards. For production information through 1993 see, *Russia: An Economic Profile*, (United States Government Publication, Washington D.C., 1994).. For a discussion of the immediate economic impact see, Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia, the Politics of Upheaval*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994).

⁵ See criticism such as Larisa Piyasheva, "Privatization, Conversion, Security: On the Wreck of the Socialist Mentality," in *The Role of the Military Sector in the Economies of Russia and Ukraine*. (RAND-Hoover Institute Symposium, November 1992). Piyasheva argues the privatization program instituted in 1992 by the Gaidar government was in fact only a poor half measure since the government continued to control large shares of "private" industries. More importantly, its controlling voice in investment and production planning was hardly diminished.

⁶ Clinton O. Longnecker and Serguei Popovski, "Managerial Trials of Privatization: Retooling Russian Managers, *Business Horizons*, 37, no. 6, November-December 1994.

complicate the economic realignment.⁷ As difficult as these problems are to overcome, they are not the major impediments. Instead, the principal brake on Russian economic development is the combination of oppressive taxation, disrespect for property rights and a rapidly changing legal code which combine to create official and unofficial corruption in all areas of the Russian economy and promote the flight of capital abroad.⁸

1. Taxation, Corruption and Capital Flight

Although economic statistics from the Soviet Union and Russia are fraught with intentional and unintentional inaccuracies, few dispute the rapid and continuous decline in the Russian economy.⁹ In the oil and gas industry where the output is more easily measured, the decline in production has been dramatic. From a production high in 1989, oil output has fallen from 552 million metric tons to 352 million metric tons in 1993.¹⁰ Gas production also fell, although much less dramatically, from a high in 1990 of 641 billion cubic meters to 618 billion cubic meters.¹¹ More importantly, projections of

⁷ "Psst, Want to Buy a Country," *The Economist*, 337, no. 7888, November 5, 1994. p. 64.

⁸ See, Stephen Sestanovich, "Doing Business in Russia," *Across the Board*, 31, no. 10, November-December 1994. See also, "The High Price of Freeing Markets: Crime in Russia," *The Economist*, 330, no. 7851, February 19, 1994.

⁹ For the problem of using Soviet and Russian economic statistics, see, Vladimir G. Treml, "Problems with Soviet Statistics: Past and Present," in *The Role of the Military Sector in the Economies of Russian and Ukraine*. (RAND-Hoover Symposium, National Defense Research Institute, Santa Monica CA., 1992).

¹⁰ *Russia: An Economic Profile*, (United States Government Publication, Washington D.C., 1994). While official statistics for 1994 are as yet unavailable, oil and gas production is estimated to be down.

¹¹ *ibid.*

output suggest that Russia' production will continue to decline with the most dire projections suggesting Russia could be a net importer of oil and gas by the turn of the century.

The direct reason for the decline in oil and gas production is that upwards of 30,000 wells are idle due to a combination of mechanical failure or lack of the necessary technology to support production from marginal wells.¹² The indirect effects of taxation, corruption and capital flight also contribute heavily in the accounting of declining production.

Tax collection in Russia, at least from Russian businesses, has gone the way of the hammer and sickle, with the estimated rate of tax compliance to be no higher than fifty percent.¹³ To make up for the shortfalls in revenue, the central government has placed high tax burdens on foreign corporations doing business in Russia. Although the official rate of taxation, thirty-eight percent on profits, is not unusually high, foreign companies also face a five dollar per barrel export fee on oil, numerous export licensing fees, a twenty-three percent value-added tax on loans from abroad and a thirty-eight percent wage tax designed to discourage high wages.¹⁴

These high rates of taxation have discouraged small to medium sized companies

¹² Alan Kovski, "Work in Russia Trickles in; Companies Wait for Dam to Burst," *The Oil Daily*, 44, no. 223. November 21, 1994.

¹³ Stephen Sestanovich, "Doing Business in Russia," *Across the Board*, 31, no. 10, November-December 1994.

¹⁴ *ibid.* See also, Alexander Barmin and Doran Doeh, "The Legal Framework for Foreign Investment in the Russian Petroleum Industry," *Petroleum Economist*, 61, no. 9. September 1994.

from investing and are prompting other firms to consider quitting the market.¹⁵ Even with these rates of taxation, foreign investment in the oil and gas industry has drawn roughly half of all foreign capital invested in Russia.¹⁶ Yet the overall amount of investment is estimated to be just over 2.7 billion dollars by the end of 1993 and with less than one billion projected for 1994, a small inflow of capital when compared to the proven oil and gas reserves.¹⁷ The government policy of relying on tax money from Western investors has yielded, through 1994, upwards of \$100 million dollars, yet it has deterred significantly more investment than it has gained in taxes. To show the extent firms have been deterred from and had difficulty in entering the Russian market, two billion dollars earmarked by the U.S. Congress for credits to firms willing to invest in Russia's oil sector has gone unclaimed. By contrast in the other former Soviet republics where taxation deals are more favorable, Western oil firms have committed to multi-billion dollar investments in the development of the Caspian Sea and the Tengiz field in Kazakhstan even though the export routes for this oil are still undetermined to a great degree. The Caspian Sea deal involves a consortium planning to invest upwards of \$18 billion and in the Tengiz field in Kazakhstan, Chevron has already invested close to \$1 billion. Neither of these figures includes the projected costs for building a transportation infrastructure.

By deterring oil investment through high taxation, Russia has been unable to meet

¹⁵ Peter Fuhrman, "What Boris Gives," *Forbes*, 154, no. 4. August 15, 1994.

¹⁶ *Economic Newsletter*, Russian Research Center Harvard University, 20, no. 2. October 15, 1994.

¹⁷ Sestanovich, "Doing Business in Russia," *Across the Board*, 31, no. 10, November-December 1994.

its timeline for sustaining and then increasing oil production that it laid out in 1992.¹⁸

More importantly, the taxation policies are self-defeating in the overall effort to rebuild the economy since petroleum exports account for roughly half of Russia's forty billion dollar export earnings.¹⁹

The obvious need to reform the taxation policies and liberalize the laws concerning foreign investment stall when faced with the onslaught of official corruption. In all aspects of investing, the confused legal structures, the limited market access and high taxation rates offer lucrative opportunities for graft. The estimates of corruption are staggering, according to the Russian Interior Ministry, roughly forty percent of the goods and services sold are controlled by criminal organizations.²⁰ Western firms also pay out between twenty and forty percent of their profits for "security services" to the Russian mafia.

Corruption is also fostered through governmental policies that work against free market competition. High level corruption is fostered by restrictions on the number of firms authorized to export oil, with few firms receiving the export license, government officials have been able to demand up to a ten percent bribe on the value of exports.²¹ In addition, the low domestic price of oil, only \$6.50 a barrel, has led to wide-spread

¹⁸ "Continued Slide Seen for C.I.S. Oil Production," *The Oil and Gas Journal*, 90, no. 46. November 16, 1992.

¹⁹ *Russia: An Economic Profile*, (United States Government Publication, Washington D.C., 1994). Raw materials and chemical products also form a large portion of the export market. The export of finished goods, except for armaments, is insignificant.

²⁰ Sestanovich, "Doing Business in Russia," *Across the Board*, 31, no. 10, November-December 1994.

²¹ Fuhrman, "What Boris Gives," *Forbes*, 154, no. 4. August 15, 1994.

smuggling of oil by Russian firms, including many involved in joint ventures with Western companies.²² Moreover, Russian political figures accuse Western firms of serving as cover for smuggling and have suggested tougher restrictions on their activities. Increased scrutiny is seen as yet more opportunities to demand bribes and impose tax and legal restrictions.

In spite of the relative paucity of foreign investment and the general decline in Russia's energy industry, large amounts of money are being made. The benefits to Russia are limited since the bulk of the hard currency earned through the sale of raw materials and petroleum products never makes its way into the country. According to the Russian Ministry of Interior, the flight of capital from Russia, which includes payments to Russian shell firms abroad for exports, averages between one and two billion dollars a month with an estimated fifty to one hundred billion having left since 1990.²³ In essence, Russian capital flight is between twenty-five and fifty times the foreign investment and roughly equal to the amount of capital that Moscow deemed necessary to transform the economy and restore its productivity.

Government revenues from the oil trade are also affected since an estimated 1.5 billion dollars paid the government in revenues are never returned to Russia.²⁴ In all likelihood, this money was skimmed off by corrupt officials spread throughout the

²² "Crime Crisis Hits Oil Trade," *Petroleum Economist*, 60, no. 7. July 1993.

²³ *Economic Newsletter*, Russian Research Center Harvard University, 20, no. 2, October 15, 1994.

²⁴ *ibid.*

regulatory process.

Not surprisingly, Russian investors are no more eager to invest in Russia than foreigners. Real investment in the economy by private sources continues to fall, declining twenty-eight percent in the first quarter of 1994.²⁵ The decline of the ruble in late 1994 was expected to push investment down further.

The combination of these factors serves as an effective brake on the Russian economy, institutionalizing the structural, managerial and legal inefficiencies that continue to prevent Russia from using its natural resources to finance an economic recovery. These factors also contribute to the declining infrastructure by making capital investment and technological upgrades to the transportation infrastructure unattractive to Western investors.

2. The Crumbling Infrastructure

Taxation and corruption are not the only factors cutting into Russia's industrial production. A wholesale decline in the production and transportation infrastructure is causing literally billions of dollars of needless losses. The oil and gas industry once again is the most dramatic example. Western estimates suggest at least ten percent of Russia's oil production, upward of 920,000 bbl per day, is lost due to leaks and spills.²⁶ Upward of forty percent of all natural gas extracted is also lost due to both limited and inefficient

²⁵ *Economic Newsletter*, Russian Research Center Harvard University, 19, no. 9, May 16, 1994.

²⁶ "Report on Russia Energy Sector Paints Dismal Ecological Scene," *Pipeline and Gas Journal*, 221, no. 7, July 1994.

recovery plants.²⁷

Production of oil and gas has fallen since Russia lacks the technology to extract from marginal wells. Presently, nearly 30,000 wells are idled for a combination of inferior technology and broken or damaged equipment.²⁸

In addition to flagging production, Russian producers are finding it increasingly difficult to get the oil to market. The pipeline infrastructure is no longer able to get the oil to market without significant losses.²⁹ Major losses from pipeline brakes are now routine. One section of pipeline in the Komi Republic suffered over 800 breaks in 1992 alone.³⁰ The vast majority of Russian lines are approaching the end of their scheduled lifespan. In addition, these lines were not built to world standards and are lacking modern leak detection and automatic shut-off systems.³¹

In spite of the large number of idle wells and leaking pipelines, Russian officials and producers, against Western advice, continue to push for new production over upgrades and improvements to their existing system of production and transportation.

3. The Effect: Reduced Exports and Revenues

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Kovski, "Work in Russia Trickles in; Companies Wait for Dam to Burst," *The Oil Daily*, 44, no. 223. November 21, 1994.

²⁹ Bhushan Bahree, "Russian Oil Spill Spotlights Need to Upgrade Poor Pipeline System," *Wall St. Journal*, October 28, 1994. pA12.

³⁰ "Report on Russia Energy Sector Paints Dismal Ecological Scene," *Pipeline and Gas Journal*, 221, no. 7, July 1994.

³¹ *ibid.*

The combination of taxation, corruption, capital flight and a crumbling infrastructure has drastically reduced the output of Russia's oil industry. After reaching a high in 1988, output has fallen by nearly half. More importantly, the prospects for improvements in the production or transport sectors are unlikely. Western investment, although continuing, is much lower than either industrial estimates or Russian desires. Faced with declining production and falling revenue, Russia will need to find new ways to replace the loss of hard currency. Presently, decreases in domestic consumption have allowed some substitution to the export market, partially compensating for the decline in production. Nonetheless, this trend is not sustainable over either the near or mid-term.

To compensate, Russia has sought to closely integrate the energy industries of the former Soviet states with its own. This effort provides numerous direct and indirect benefits to Russia. First, integration offers Russia the opportunity to share revenues generated by new production. Second, by creating a common pipeline network, Russia gains transport fees and acquires new partners to share the capital costs of building or improving the pipelines. Third, integration provides Russia a ready market for oil-related industrial production and sales. Lastly, Russian moves into the oil sector of the former Soviet states also creates an opportunity to acquire Western technology for use in their own domestic sector.

B. THE OVERLAP OF ECONOMIC AND SECURITY POLICY IN THE CAUCASUS

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has viewed the Caucasus region as an area of potential instability and unrest that could spread into the Russian Federation. For reasons outlined in Chapter III, Russia has attempted to assert its influence in the area as means of ensuring a pro-Russian orientation and neutralizing potential threats to its borders. Beyond this strong motivation is the equally persuasive draw of economic gain through involvement in the production of gas and oil in Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea. The seemingly compelling need, by Russia, to extend its influence to preserve stability is matched by the potential revenues from oil production and transport. As such, economics and security concerns, for Russia, overlap in the Caucasus.

This overlap can be seen through three economic objectives that complement security interests. The first is the need to secure new revenue sources for the failing Russian economy. To accomplish this, Russia needs to extend its influence into the new states of the Caucasus. Second is the need to counter outside influence. Economically, Russia cannot compete with Western firms' advanced technology, nor does it wish to compete politically with democratic ideas or Islamic ideals. Third is the need to acquire new technology. Since the pace of foreign investment in Russia has fallen off, joint ventures in the Caucasus offer a way to obtain Western technology at a favorable cost.

To accomplish these objectives, Russia has manipulated the political situation in the trans-Caucasus in order to obtain these goals. While only the most ardent opponents of Russia would claim Russia's hand is behind every conflict, there is significant reason to

believe Moscow has used the region's instability to its advantage. To demonstrate this connection, this thesis will examine Russian action in light of two key issues. First is the exploration rights of the Caspian Sea and the efforts by an international oil consortium to produce in the region. Second is the ongoing search for the construction of a pipeline to export Caspian oil.

The prospects of the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union varied greatly. For those states which harbored abundant natural resources, the economic prospects were strong; Azerbaijan was one such state. The oil and gas industry was firmly established in Azerbaijan both in production and refining, but it was the draw of the Caspian Sea oil and gas fields just off Baku that promised to be the largest boons for the economy. In early 1992, immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western investors focused serious attention on developing these fields.³²

For the Western firms seeking to develop and export Caspian oil, the principal difficulty is not extraction but transporting the oil to market. Several possibilities for transport have been proposed ranging from pipelines through Armenia and Turkey, Iran and Turkey, Georgia and Russia. Each of these proposals has run into political difficulties of varying degree.

The preferred pipeline route for the Western oil firms was a line that crossed Armenia into Turkey and connected with the already established oil pipeline network used

³² "BP-Statoil to Study Caspian Oil Projects; South Korea Eyes Yakut Gas," *Oil and Gas Journal*, 90, no. 37, September 14, 1992.

to transport Iraqi oil.³³ This proposal, which was vigorously opposed by Russia, was unattainable as long as the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) continued. The conflict began in the waning days of the Soviet Union, when Karabakh Armenians, using their new-found political freedoms demanded the NKAO, which is part of Azerbaijan, be reunited with Armenia. The simmering tensions erupted into full-scale conflict in 1990. Since then, the war has been an on-again off-again series of offensives and counter-offensives with the Karabakh Armenians generally faring better than the Azerbaijanis.

Although Russia is clearly not responsible for the outbreak of ethnic hostilities, many see Moscow's hands behind the continuation of fighting.³⁴ Specifically, Russia is accused of manipulating the fighting in order to block the development of any pipeline deal that does not cross Russia. The danger for Moscow is that a large capacity pipeline constructed through Turkey would also draw oil from Kazakhstan as well, further reducing Russia influence and revenue. Moreover, the pipeline would give Turkey a huge stake in the development of the economies of the Caucasus and Central Asian States. An economic stake, that would also create a major political role for Turkey. By contrast, Russia was pushing for a network of pipelines, both existing and new construction, to run

³³ Stephen J. Blank, *Energy and Security in TransCaucasia*, (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa, 1994).

³⁴ *ibid.* See also Thomas Goltz, "The Hidden Russian Hand," *Foreign Policy*, no. 92, Fall 1994. p. 92- 116.

from Azerbaijan into the Russian Caucasus republics and then to the Black Sea.³⁵

As the negotiations began between Western firms and Azerbaijan in early 1992, Moscow's ability to compete was decidedly limited. Russia's economic influence in Azerbaijan and its ability to sell the Russian route were relatively insignificant. Specifically, Moscow lacked the capital and technology to develop the off-shore fields and expand and upgrade the network of pipelines from Baku into Russia. Moreover, Azerbaijani President Abulfaz Elchibey was decidedly pro-Turkish in political outlook, viewing Russian overtures as threatening approaches.³⁶ Unable to win support for its proposal of a Russia-based pipeline, Moscow sought to use political and military levers to influence the economic situation.

In this process, Russia has been accused of using covert measures to incite ethnic fighting in Abkhazia and in the Nagorno-Karabakh.³⁷ Regardless of the validity of these claims of Russian meddling, Moscow has moved forcefully to profit from the instability. The change in government in Azerbaijan, through a 1993 coup, brought to power a leader, Geidar Aliyev, who proved to be more sympathetic to Russian national interests at least initially.

Although Russia held significant leverage over Armenia and the Karabakh Armenians, it refused to use this leverage to help reach a ceasefire in the fighting until

³⁵ "Pipeline Politics of Central Asia Studied," *Platt's Oilgram News*, 72, no. 79, April 25, 1994.

³⁶ Blank, *Energy and Security in TransCaucasia*, (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa, 1994).

³⁷ Goltz, "The Hidden Russian Hand," *Foreign Policy*, no. 92, Fall 1994. p. 92- 116.

Azerbaijan, under the new Aliyev government, agreed to a series of Russian demands. Foremost among these was a significant stake in the Caspian consortium.³⁸ After meeting these demands, Russian support enabled the Azeris to turn back a series of Karabakh offensives although they fell short of re-imposing their control over the Oblast. Russian assistance had helped to return the situation to the status quo ante except that in the process it expanded its political influence over both sides. However, Russian involvement did not produce a peace, thus precluding any pipeline route through Armenia.

Russia could force these demands on Baku because its political involvement was crucial to reaching a ceasefire in the dispute. The support given by Russia to the Armenians had enabled both Yerevan and the Karabakh Armenians to resist international peace efforts and as some suggest, assist Armenian attacks against Azerbaijan.³⁹ Although part of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk peace group, Moscow specifically was opposed to the efforts by the OSCE to introduce outside peacekeepers into the region as well as to its plan for settling the conflict. This proposal would have produced favorable economic benefits for all involved parties except for Russia. For its part, Russia sought to use its own troops under the auspices of the C.I.S. to police the ceasefire.⁴⁰ Russian peacekeepers would, in essence, formalize

³⁸ Patrick Connole, "Russia's Caspian Role Raises Concern," *Platt's Oilgram News*, 72, no. 109, June 7, 1994.

³⁹ See, Fiona Hill and Pamela Jewett, *Back in the USSR, Russia's Intervention in the Internal Affairs of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia*. (Harvard University Ethnic Conflict Project, 1994).

⁴⁰ Aidyn Mekhtiyev, "Karabakh Settlement: Moscow Still Wants to be Chief Player," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, in the *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 46, no. 46, November 10,

Moscow's influence.

By blocking a ceasefire effort, Russia ensured no deal could be made unless it was a major player. The result was Russia arranged a ceasefire for an uncatalyzed ten percent stake in the Caspian consortium.⁴¹ The ten percent stake is against projected revenues of \$120 billion, although the potential is much higher.⁴² Moreover, the share gives Russia greater leverage in the process of selecting an outlet for exporting the oil.

Russia's leverage on choosing a pipeline route was also enhanced by its new-found role as peacekeeper in the Caucasus. By inserting its forces into Georgia to end conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russian military units were along the routes to the Black Sea needed for a pipeline through Georgia. Essentially, the Russian presence could prevent the construction of a Georgian pipeline. In the NKAO as well, the planned introduction of Russian peacekeepers prevents the use of this area as a route for a pipeline unless Russia agrees, an unlikely event. These actions essentially reduced the route choices to two, through Iran and then Turkey or through Russia. The West's resistance to a pipeline through Iran makes the alternative through Russia more appealing by default.

Western oil firms and governments and Azerbaijan still hope to find a non-Russian path for the oil. To deal with this effort, Russia has attempted to undermine the right of

1994.

⁴¹ Stephen J. Blank, *Energy and Security in TransCaucasia*, (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa, 1994). Also, Connole, "Russia's Caspian Role Raises Concern," *Platt's Oilgram News*, 72, no. 109, June 7, 1994.

⁴² David Knott, "Caspian Sea Activity Picking Up Off Former Soviet Union Republics," *Oil and Gas Journal*, 93, no. 5, January 30, 1995.

the consortium, of which one of its firms is a party, to extract oil by claiming that a previous treaty with Iran makes Caspian Sea mineral resources non-divisible.⁴³ To deal with the post-Soviet situation, Russia is seeking a Caspian Sea summit to define the scope of ownership. Such a move could clearly slow down production efforts since it would involve five states angling for control. More importantly, it would also bring Iran into the negotiations, an element the West is trying to avoid.

In addition, Russia has applied pressure directly to one of the consortium's major players, Chevron, by restricting the flow of oil from Chevron's Tengiz field in Kazakhstan into the Russian pipeline system.⁴⁴ This pressure is designed to push Chevron into accepting Russia as a partner as well as opting for the Russian route. Russia's aims in this effort are to get Chevron to agree to fund the construction of a pipeline from the Black Sea to the Tengiz field in Kazakhstan. A modern line in this area would create added incentive for Chevron and the other consortium partners to connect Azeri output to this line. Chevron however, balked at the terms of the deal which called for it to put up 100 percent financing in return for a twenty-five percent share.

By using its military leverage in the form of peacekeepers and assistance to Armenia, Russia was able to neutralize its inferior economic position and gain a significant share of the expected Caspian oil revenues. Moreover, it did this while simultaneously minimizing outside influence since Russian participation and acceptance must be at the

⁴³ Elmar Guseinov, "Caspian Oil Will Bypass Russia from the South," *Izvestia*, November 17, 1994, p. 3.

⁴⁴ "Russia's Hardline on Kazakh Oil Exports Threatens Billions in Western Investment," *Oil Daily*, 44, no. 138, July 20, 1994.

core of every deal. From an economically inferior position, Russia was able to carve out significant potential gains in revenue from the Caspian Sea oil as well as from Kazakh oil. In addition, it was able to do this while extending its political influence. Only one aspect remains unresolved from Russia's perspective, reaching an agreement on the pipeline through Russia. Should Western firms accept this route for lack of other options, Russia stands to gain both revenue and technology.

The route proposed by Russia ran from Baku to Grozny to Novorossiysk along an existing but inadequate pipeline.⁴⁵ The problem with the route is evident in that the Chechnya republic, in the turmoil surrounding the collapse of the Soviet Union, emerged as a de facto independent state. Two years of efforts to reassert Russian political control over the break-away republic failed. Russian press commentators are now speculating that the invasion was launched to secure the pipeline route for Caspian crude.⁴⁶

C. ASSESSING ECONOMIC MOTIVES

As previously suggested, drawing exact links between foreign policy and economic interests is far too simple. Yet in the case of the Caucasus, Russia has clearly factored its economic interests into play when constructing its larger foreign and security policy toward the region. Moreover, Russian policy clearly takes into account its own domestic economic shortfalls as well as its economic needs when constructing this policy.

This argument suggested that Russia's economic interests overlapped in the need

⁴⁵ Azer Mursaliyev, "Diplomatic Geography Smells of Oil," *Moscow News*, July 8, 1994, p. 5.

⁴⁶ See, *Provincial Press News Service*, March 6, 1995 for an analysis of articles in *Nezavisimay Gazeta* and *Zavtra* concerning the conflict.

to extend its influence into the Caucasus, counter outside influence and acquire new sources of revenue and technology. To this end, Moscow's efforts have been remarkably successful to date. These policies have produced the following results: a Russian oil firm, Lukoil, was given a ten percent stake in the Caspian Sea Consortium and Moscow went from an outside player in area's oil production to a key if not critical player. The only unfulfilled objective is the securing of a pipeline route through Russia vice Turkey or Iran.

It would be a mistake to assume Russian actions in this region arise solely from economic interests yet it is also naive to assume these interests have no place in the calculations that create and drive Russian foreign policy.

V. THE CONTINUING INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY IN RUSSIA

A. THE MULTI-ETHNIC POST-EMPIRE EMPIRE

1. Ethno-nationalism: A Force of the Past, Present or Future

Throughout the Cold War, the terms Russian and Soviet were used interchangeably to refer to the Soviet Union and its citizens by Western observers, overlooking or ignoring the multi-ethnic character of the Soviet Union. With the exception of the Baltic states and a handful of ethnic minorities with a strong expatriate lobbying group, Western nations paid little to no attention to the deep ethnic fissures within the Soviet Union. These fissures began to develop as the various nationalities of the Soviet Union sought greater use of their native language, a revival of their historical and cultural traditions and an opportunity to practice their traditional religion.

The visibility of these deep fissures grew more obvious in the rise in population of non-Russians within the empire. By 1991, ethnic Russians accounted for only a bare majority of the total population and their population growth rate was falling while those of ethnic minorities, especially Islamic people from the southern tier of the empire, were exploding.¹ Along with the shift in the demographic composition of the population came a widespread growth or renewal of ethnic awareness and national identity among non-Russian minority groups. Encouraged by the loosening of restrictions during *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, ethnic associations began to demand a redress of their stature by attempting

¹ See, Mikhail S. Bernstam, "The Demography of Soviet Ethnic groups in World Perspective," in Robert Conquest, Ed., *The Last Empire, Nationality and the Soviet Future*, (Hoover Institute Press, Stanford CA., 1986).

Under assault by nationalist groups, the Communist Party was unable or unwilling to mobilize and employ the force necessary to suppress these associations. By 1991, the center collapsed and the Soviet Union split along its 15 ethnically-based Union Republics; Republics, which in theory, were based on a single ethnic group.² In reality, the Communist regime from the Lenin-Stalin period onward, manipulated the boundaries of these Republics to weaken the power of the titular nationality and to create competitive minority enclaves. The end result was a series of tortured territorial boundaries where ethnic groups were mixed and historic homelands broken and divided among different governing administrations.³ Nonetheless, it was these tortured borders that were to become the basis for the post-Soviet sphere and their disputed nature has served to guarantee widespread ethnic tension among the new states of the former Soviet Union. The ethnic and territorial disputes in the post-Soviet sphere are, in many ways, reminiscent of the ethnic-based disputes that occurred after the dissolution of other empires.

The collapse of the USSR was, in effect, the long overdue break-up of the last of the European multi-ethnic empires. Russia, like the all the other great empires of Europe

² The Union Republics were established by three rules, (1) a common border with a foreign state, (2) a minimum population of one million and (3) half of the population must belong to the titular nationality group. See, Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda, *Soviet Disunion, A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR*, (Free Press, New York, 1990).

³ Five methods to dilute minority nationalism are identified in Jessica Eve Stern, "Moscow Meltdown: Can Russia Survive?" *International Security*, 18, no. 4, (Spring 1994), p. 40-65. These are (1) creation of autonomous ethnic republics within Union Republics, (2) combining two equal sized ethnic groups in one ethnic republic, (3) dividing the ethnic group among more than one republic, (4) deportation (5) encouraged Russian migration.

experienced in 1991 the decolonialization of its Imperial holdings. This decolonialization process that began with the collapse of the Soviet Union, although dramatic, is incomplete. The Russian Federation (RSFR) remains a rump Imperial Russia continuing to encompass a mix of ethnic and cultural forces that do not share a common political bond.

Like the Soviet Union, Russia's rule extends over a wide-range of culturally antagonistic ethnic groups that reside on their historic homelands in significantly large numbers. Many areas of the Russian Federation are relatively recent colonial conquests where the native population, in spite of purges, deportations and executions remains the majority or at least the largest single ethnic group. This aspect remains true even though the new state is more ethnically homogeneous, yet one in five Russian citizens is not an ethnic Russian, roughly 30 million persons.⁴

The apparent similarities of the Soviet and Russian position aside, many observers, most notably Jack Snyder, Susan Clark, David Graham and Elizabeth Teague, dismiss the notion that ethnic nationalism will produce or contribute to the break-up of the Russian Federation as it did to the Soviet Union. They cite, *inter alia*, a population more ethnically homogeneous, the apparent stabilization of the political process, the preponderance of Russians in many of the ethnic homelands and the difficult geographic position the republics would encounter if they were to become independent states as the

⁴ For census data on ethnicity see, Paul B. Henze, "The Demography of the Caucasus according to 1989 Soviet Census Data," *Central Asian Survey*, 10, no. 1/2, (1991), p. 147-170.

principal reasons why further disintegration is not likely.⁵ Essentially, they are correct; no upswell in ethno-nationalism spread across all 21 autonomous republics is likely to occur, but, the multi-ethnic composition of the Russian state may still force an evolution in the relations between Moscow and the periphery that could produce anything from the partial restructuring to the total fracturing of the Russian state. In the ongoing process of devolution of power from the center to the periphery, ethno-nationalism is a powerful and dangerous political card that Republic leaders, if threatened, could use to incite and promote conflict to maintain their power. It is through the dispute over center-periphery power relationships that the potential for nationalism to emerge, first as a political pawn and then as an uncontrollable force, is most likely.

2. The End as the Beginning

To see why the continued, if albeit reduced multi-ethnic construction of the Russian state continues to play a vital role in the internal and external dimensions of the state, it is important to remember that the end of the Soviet Union serves as the beginning of Russia. This beginning is more than a trite phrase, for the obvious continuity is obscured by the appearance of dramatic change.

The political structure of the post December 1991 Russian Federation has as its origins, not the collective agreement of a new breed of democrats, but the institutional structure of the Soviet Union. In fact, the Russian Federation political structure is

⁵ See, Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," *Survival*, 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993), Susan L. Clark and David R. Graham, "The Russian Federation's Fight for Survival," *Orbis*, 39, no. 3, (Summer 1995), p. 329-351, and Elizabeth Teague, "Center-Periphery Relations in the Russian Federation," in Roman Szporluk, Ed., *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, (Armonk N.Y., M.E. Sharpe, 1994), p21-57.

essentially unchanged from its Soviet predecessor, to include the wholesale transfer of political and bureaucratic structures.⁶ The RSFR inherited the Soviet federal structure, based on both ethnicity and territory. Twenty-one ethnic Autonomous Republics and ten national homelands share the political landscape with an equally vast assortment of regional governments as well as the national government.⁷ Originally, these autonomous republics were created to give smaller ethnic minorities, essentially those that did not rate a Union Republic or were isolated from a foreign border, a "national homeland." The Soviet constitution granted these Autonomous Republics the symbols of sovereignty, among these were control over taxes, trade and social policy. During the Communist rule, these trappings of sovereignty were principally fictitious, but in the political upswell of the late 1980's, the legal fiction of autonomy became a practical reality.

The independence drive of the Baltic Republics, as well as Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, spurred the remaining Union Republics and the Russian Autonomous Republics to demand the greater power from the Communist center in which they were entitled under Soviet law. At first, as Elizabeth Teague notes, in the late 1980's the principal motivations for the Russian Republics were economic.⁸ The resource rich Republics using the legal structures of the Soviet constitution sought to withhold their taxes from the center as well as to increase the local profits from resource extractions.

⁶ The ratification of a new constitution and federal treaty over the past three years have of course changed the system from its Soviet predecessor. Nonetheless, the need for these documents and the players that crafted them began to emerge in the Soviet period.

⁷ Clark and Graham, "The Russian Federation's Fight for Survival."

⁸ Teague, "Center-Periphery Relations in the Russian Federation."

The Republics were trying to work around the system of low-fixed prices and controlled inter-republic trade because it amounted to a subsidy by the resource-rich areas for the inefficient industrial regions.

Concerned over the growing separatist movements among Union Republics, Gorbachev moved in 1991 to weaken the Union Republic's ability to claim or exercise economic or political sovereignty, but it had the unintended effect of making Russian Republics the legal equivalent of their Union counterparts. This effort, the All Union Law on the Delimitation of Powers Between the USSR and the Subjects of the Federation, produced a "string of declarations of sovereignty by Russia's autonomous republics."⁹ Again, the benefits of doing so were principally economic, but the process of assuming the duties of government from the federal center gave rise to politically motivated and powerful local interests, some of which were based on or cravenly used ethnic concerns.

These declaratory statements of republic sovereignty began to take on a semblance of truth because of the power struggle between Yeltsin and Gorbachev that emerged in 1990. It served Yeltsin's purpose to have the autonomous republics within the Russian Federation take over the mineral and industrial assets of their republics while simultaneously withholding tax revenue, a tactic that Yeltsin was also using to weaken the Communist party.¹⁰

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ In his effort to unseat Gorbachev, Yeltsin, in August 1990, told officials of the Autonomous Republics to assume whatever powers and sovereignty they could handle. He did this in spite of warnings that it would set a dangerous precedent of separatism. Three years later,

The Republics emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union with significantly enhanced political power and a great measure of control over their own economic fortunes. Moreover, by withholding taxes, they also acquired tremendous leverage over the scope, pace and success of national reforms. Lacking the power to extend Federal rule to the regions, Yeltsin was forced to accept the status quo of increased Autonomous Republic and regional power in an effort to keep Russia from further disintegration.

Yeltsin's efforts to maintain Russia's integrity, relegated the work on a new constitution to a secondary position and propelled the development of a new federal treaty to the paramount political objective. The eventual signing of an agreement in 1993 did little to reorder the power relationships or to clearly delineate center or periphery political and economic-roles, much less decide where ultimate sovereignty resided. Because not one but three agreements were needed, one for each administrative unit, republics, krais and oblasts, no single framework for the Russian Federation has been agreed to and signed by all parties. Territorial governments have sought to claim Republic status in an effort to obtain the same economic and political benefits. More importantly, not all the Republics signed the treaty; Tatarstan and Chechnya did not, and others attached exclusive conditions that seemed at odds with the treaty's basic provisions.¹¹

he admitted that the nation was gripped by anxiety over its territorial integrity. See, Teague, "Center-Periphery Relations in Russia."

¹¹ Susan L. Clark and David R. Graham, "The Russian Federation's Fight for Survival," *Orbis*, 39, no. 3, (Summer 1995), p. 329-351. For example, both Tuva and Baskhorotstan inserted clauses in their bi-lateral signing of the Federal treaty stipulating their sovereign status as a state in confederation with Russia.

The Federal treaty also implies that the ethnic republics are sovereign members of a confederation retaining their rights to govern both their domestic affairs and foreign economic transactions. Yet the poorly written agreement also reserves many of these rights to the Federal government. Ultimately, the treaty's muddled effort at establishing powers has done little to settle disputes or change the defacto devolution of power to the regions; nor, has it fundamentally changed the legal basis upon which the ethnic republics claim sovereignty.

The Autonomous Republics efforts to wrest power from the center has been mirrored by similar moves by Russia's regional governments (Oblast and Krai). Like their Republic counterparts, the principal aim has been to obtain greater control over their own economic resources. In addition, regional governments, out of necessity, have assumed many of the social burdens from the central government as well as the cost of the care and feeding of military and security forces. Moscow's inability to fund these activities have had the affect of driving many of the central government's bureaucratic and military arms into political and economic alliances with local leaders.¹²

Because the resource-rich regions or Republics have a greater ability to assume these expenses, Russia's sub-units have evolved into essentially a rich and poor class. Regions and Republics lacking resources or that are heavily industrialized remain dependent on subsidies to keep their social and economic infrastructure intact. Without financial help, these regions could suffer extreme unemployment and possibly social

¹² See, Teague, "Center-Periphery Relations in Russia," p. 38-41.

unrest.¹³

A key dilemma facing Yeltsin or any potential successor, peaceful or otherwise, is how to address the growing disparity in power and living standards that have developed among Russia's various sub-divisions. At present, the Federal government lacks the ability to enforce its rule, especially in tax collection, over the various regional governments except by force and even this method is doubtful. Moreover any effort by the Federal government to take back political powers and rights belonging to the regions could prompt resistance on the part of local governments. The most damaging move against the central government would occur if the regions completely withheld tax revenues. In addition, if the local governments could unite to form a regional economic trading bloc, as they tried to do but failed in 1992, they could pull control of the economic from the center to the periphery.

3. Ethno-nationalism as a Political Insurance Policy

The devolution of power from the Federal center to the local government does not imply nor pre-ordain the future fragmentation of the Russian Federation. As Clark and Graham forcefully argue, the current trend is not toward ethnic separatism but to a loose confederation.¹⁴ Yet the political maneuvering to retain local powers could involve the appeals to ethno-nationalism in order to mobilize support and raise the stakes for Moscow.

The case of Chechnya, although the most extreme example, shows the power of

¹³ Vitaly Shlykov, "Economic Reform and the Military in Russia," unpublished paper.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

appealing to nationalism, especially its religious component. These appeals have mobilized enough support from the competing Chechen clans to enable the regime of Dzhokhar Dudayev to carry on after the initial Russian military onslaught. Moreover, the appeals have defined the terms of the conflict as a clash of opposing cultures and not an internal civil revolt. Russian opposition leaders and journalists openly questioned the value of the action in Chechnya on the basis of the danger of provoking a greater clash between Islam and Orthodoxy.¹⁵

Other illustrative actions of ethno-nationalism and regionalism at play in Russian politics can be seen in the positions of the various Republics and regional governments concerning Chechnya. Although none have come out in open support of the Chechen regime, nearly all of the Republics and most of the regions have been openly critical of Yeltsin's decision to invade. Denunciations of the action were widespread, including all of the North Caucasus Republics, as well as the key Republics of Tatarstan, Baskhorotostan and Tuva. Regional governments, especially those with strong local control over the economy, were equally hostile to the invasion.¹⁶

More importantly, several Republics undertook action designed to pressure the Federal Government to halt its current policy or to surrender more political powers to the regional governments. For example, Chuvash Republic President Nikolai Fyodorov

¹⁵ See, "Russia's Politicians Leery of War in Chechnya," *CDPSP*, 46, no. 49, (January 4, 1995), p. 6, and "Most Political Leaders Oppose Yeltsin on Chechnya," *CDPSP*, 46, no. 50, (January 11, 1995), p. 9.

¹⁶ "Regional Heads Begin to Draw Away From Moscow," in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 47, no. 5, (March 1, 1995), p15-16.

demanded that Chuvash soldiers be excluded from service in Chechnya.¹⁷ In addition, several Republic leaders have called for the revival of the Council of Heads of Republics. This Council, as part of the executive branch, would increase the political voice of the Republics in national decision-making.¹⁸

B. THE INFLUENCE ON FOREIGN POLICY

The continuing multi-ethnic construct of the Russian Federation influences the shape and direction of its foreign policy in three ways. First, is the foreign reaction to potential or actual ethnic unrest or conflict. This reaction could be either a hesitation to invest or a more extreme application of political pressure to change Russian policy. Second, ethnic unrest and Russia's inability to enforce its suzerainty could reduce its stature in its neighboring nations leading to increased challenges from abroad. The last potential foreign policy influence could come from the emergence of the Autonomous Republics as foreign policy actors, even if they fall short of declaring a complete break from Moscow. These Republics, through foreign economic agreements, could have a significant influence on the Russian state and the structure of the post-Soviet sphere.

1. The Foreign Costs of Domestic Instability

After two years and numerous failed overt efforts and one unsuccessful coup attempt, Russian President Boris Yeltsin ordered a massive military invasion of the Republic of Chechnya in order to overthrow the defacto government that was at odds

¹⁷ *ibid*, p. 16.

¹⁸ See, "Regional Leaders Try to Revive Council of Heads of Republics 'From Below'," in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 47, no. 2, () p. 22.

with Moscow. Although Yeltsin's actions were of questionable constitutionality since he declared a state of emergency without receiving parliamentary approval, in a public statement he claimed the purpose of the invasion was to safeguard the very document he was trampling over.¹⁹ The attack and the Kremlin's ensuing lying and deception over the scope, purpose and extent of the attack turned what had been to the West, an obscure minor conflict on the Russian frontier, into a measure of Moscow's willingness to continue and accept democratic and economic reforms.

The Western reaction to the invasion was remarkably reserved on the subject of the rule of law, the treatment of non-combatants or the scope of human rights abuses. The West did, however, reconsider a number of economic assistance measures, put off consideration of Russia's entrance into the Council of Europe and renewed the discussion of quick NATO expansion into Eastern Europe.

These measures underscore the potential backlash of heavy-handed efforts to suppress ethnic minorities within the Federation. Western financial aid and investment in Russia's energy, minor even in comparison to Eastern Europe, could quickly disappear in all but a few sectors (these being weapons dismantlement and reactor maintenance and, while needed, they hardly rank as job or economy-stimulating industries).²⁰

¹⁹ "Appeal to the Citizens of Russia," *Rossiiskiy Vesti*, December 14, 1995, in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 46, no. 50, (January 11, 1995), p.2.

²⁰ Foreign investment in Russia between 1991 and 1994 was estimated at under \$2.7 billion. Trade and investment with Russia fell in real terms in comparison to the final years of the Soviet Union. Although Moscow belabors the lack of investment, this figure does not account for governmental aid, loans or loan rescheduling. Official aid was motivated by the fears of continued instability and economic collapse while private investment was deterred for the very same reasons.

No Western nation has undertaken direct economic reprisals or sanctions as a result of the attack, but clearly all are reconsidering the scope of their aid. None want to end up financing the fighting in Chechnya or future similar occurrences and public opinion, especially in the United States, is unlikely to tolerate aid that cannot be specifically tied to nuclear disarmament, environmental cleanup or reactor maintenance. Although the initial reaction appeared timid, it should not be dismissed as weak either. The Council of Europe's decision to postpone indefinitely key economic agreements suggests fears of Russian economic collapse no longer merit unconditional support for Yeltsin.²¹

Russian observers also sense that the Chechnya invasion could indefinitely end the hopes of a Moscow-Washington partnership and herald the return of a "Cold Peace" or neo-containment. *Izvestia* wrote that the outcome of the "inept and inhuman" attack was that neo-containment advocates would win the debate and succeed in accelerated NATO expansion.²²

The invasion may also strain Russian relations with the Middle East, especially when taken in context with Moscow's support for Serbian aggression. It is unlikely these nations would respond with assistance to Chechen fighters or other Islamic people in Russia but it could manifest itself in a reluctance to consider or fund joint economic ventures or a reduced willingness to purchase Russian military equipment. The latter could prove to be the most damaging since the Gulf states have made several recent

²¹ Martin Walker, "The Importance of Chechnya," in *Europe*, no. 344, p. 24.

²² *CDPSP*, 47, no. 2, p. 21.

purchases from Moscow, based not on merit but upon political value.

2. Great Power or Fallen Giant

In discussing the role of Soviet and Imperial Russian military power, Rebecca Strode and Colin Gray wrote that Moscow's military "begets international deference and respect which might not be accorded to the regime on the basis of its performance in other areas of international competition."²³ The economic and political collapse of the Soviet Union left the new Russian state with few manifestations, other than military ones, of its former superpower status.

Status as military power was important, if not vital, to Moscow in two clear ways. First, by invoking fear it kept its imperial holdings in line. As long as ethno-national groups perceived Moscow to have overwhelming military capabilities and the will to use force, they were unlikely to rebel from the center. Second, Russia's military power was the basis of the respect paid by Moscow's neighbors. While Moscow does retain some economic and political leverage in the newly independent states because of the structure of the former Soviet economy and the presence of large numbers of ethnic Russians, these levers are likely to decrease with time and the continued collapse of the Russian economy. The longer the new states survive and the more interest the West generates in their natural resources, Moscow's levers may be reduced to military force and little else.

The difficulty Russia had in assembling the invasion force for the war in Chechnya combined with the poor showing of the troops in the field are a clear

²³ Rebecca Strode and Colin Gray, "The Imperial Dimension of Soviet Military Power," *Problems of Communism*, (November-December 1981).

demonstration of the dramatic and steep fall of the once vaulted Soviet Army. This poor showing may ease the fears of the states surrounding Russia, especially those in the difficult terrain of the Caucasus who are near many potential foreign allies. Such a showing is not likely to generate Azeri or Georgian belligerence, but it will likely strengthen their resolve to resist Russian diplomatic pressure.

3. Creating New International Actors

The last complication of a multi-ethnic state comes from the potential development of new international actors within the Russian state. These actors may take many forms from associations of individuals to regional governments. In Russia, like the Soviet Union, ethnic groups through their autonomous national rights have the potential to develop into international actors in the economic and social policy arenas. Even where these Republics recognize or give the Federal center full power over foreign and security policy, significant latitude exists for these actors to enter the international realm. To date, these Republics have generally avoided or been ignored by foreign actors and there does not appear to be a great ground-swell pushing these Republics toward increased activity in the international field, but there are several scenarios in which these Republics could increase their international contacts as part of an effort to leverage power against the Federal center.

The most likely scenario finds the Republic and regional governments negotiating large-scale direct investment in resource extraction, refining and some limited high-tech industries in exchange for guaranteed rates of taxation and definable terms of investment. Presently, the few foreign investors willing to enter joint ventures in Russia have been

frustrated by conflicting regulations and decrees as well as ever-changing tax regulations with rates that border on outright confiscation. A Republic that was willing to risk upsetting Yeltsin could receive significant economic benefits. More likely, a coalition of Republics adopting these same measures could force significant reforms at the Federal level of foreign investment rules and regulation that have hurt rather than promoted investment.

Because Republic governments control the taxation and regulatory mechanisms for the Federal government, they could in effect immediately implement reformed tax legislation even if the Federal government did not recognize the legality of the measure. Moscow's greatest trump card would be the economic blockade of the Republic, a move it undertook against Tatarstan when the latter disputed Moscow's quotas on its oil export. A coalition of Republics, a single republic bordering a foreign nation or an agreement that confined the activity to within a single Republic would be more difficult for the Federal government to obstruct. Obstruction, however, would come with the cost of continued polarization of the center and the periphery.

A Republic or regional-led economic reform effort, although interesting and beneficial, has probably failed to materialize for the same reasons Moscow has obstructed reform. The entrenchment of the bureaucracy and industrial managers combined with widespread corruption and profiteering.

Whether such a scenario comes to pass, Moscow, in its constant battle with the periphery for control has and must consider the potential for regional economic activity to drive the Federal train. Moreover, it has and will continue to take the threat of

retaliation and economic pressure to keep its political sub-divisions from setting out on their own path.

C. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF ETHNICITY

Post-Soviet Russia for all the new-found discussion of ethnic homogeneity of its population remains a multi-ethnic state, both politically and demographically. Politically, the sub-division of the state along ethno-national as well as territorial lines is a continuing reminder of the clash of ethnicity as well as a latent spark for future minority nationalism. Demographically, minorities remain a significant percentage of the total population. More importantly, the population projections, based on growth rates and migration, show a dramatic increase in the minority population and near zero or possibly a decline in ethnic Russians. Essentially, the high-water mark of an ethnically homogenous Russian state has passed and only future geographic contractions would change these trends.

The influence of ethnicity on Russian politics remains and will likely grow with demographic disparities in the coming years. This impact on the domestic situation will necessarily carry over into foreign policy just as foreign developments will likely influence the scope of ethnic relations within Russia.

For the foreseeable future, Russia's economic health will remain shaky at best. The economic dislocations and regional discrepancies in income will fuel desire, especially on the part of resource endowed areas to gain greater control over their own economic activities. Ethnicity may not be the principal factor but could serve as a rallying point. In addition, the needed structural and legal reforms that could improve

Russia's economic health would produce the influx of foreign ideas, contacts and capitals into the Russian periphery and these would almost demand that local control grow.

To gain the foreign investment and technology to assist this revitalization will require Russia to remain on favorable, if not friendly terms with the West and, equally important, to appear politically stable. Internal unrest based on declining economic fortunes or ethnic unrest will deter critically needed capital, as will harsh crackdowns on ethnic minorities and the reimposition of rigid central control over the political process.

VI. DEFINING RUSSIA'S POLITICAL CULTURE

A. A ROADMAP WITHOUT A DESTINATION

The last of the "persistent factors" influencing Russian foreign policy is an absence of a clearly defined and accepted Russian political philosophy to guide the nation's interests. In whatever form the empire existed, Imperial, Soviet state or post-Soviet transitional neo-democracy, Russia has never had a definable political culture that emerged from its own historical and social development.¹ Rather, it has often reflected and emulated segments of the cultural and political ideas with whom it was in contact. Interaction or emulation did not, however, firmly root Russia into any of these political cultures; rather Moscow and St. Petersburg operated on the margins of the various cultures, sometimes in, sometimes out, but never truly belonging to any one. The phrase Reiber uses to describe this, "cultural marginality," implies not an inferior or lesser culture but simply a culture at the edge or margins of many of the world's most influential political traditions.

There are two dynamics to this concept of "cultural marginality." The first is an internal or domestic aspect in which a society shares a common vision or principles regarding its political heritage. For cultures and nations, a common perception of their own political myths shapes both the form of government, its outlook on the world, the interactions with those it encounters, as well as the definition of its own role in world and

¹ Communism or Marxist-Leninism was a defining political philosophy but it was certainly not the result of a genuine domestic social and political agreement. Moreover, the eventual corruption of the regime and state raise questions as to how long this philosophy was influential or merely a political cover for totalitarian rule.

domestic affairs. Russians, for the last several centuries, have debated this issue to determine the direction and worth of their society. While many strong advocates for a variety of positions have developed and argued for the adoption of a number of political philosophies, the society as a whole has not readily coalesced behind a single political idea as society's guiding principle. This questioning has deep historical roots even though the repressive regimes of the Tsar and Soviet periods attempted to stamp out this debate. More importantly, in the aftermath of these regimes, the question has resurfaced. It remains unanswered today, for just as Russians are still coping with where are Russia's borders, so too do they continue to ask what is Russia.

The second dynamic is an externally projected one in which Russia defines, not just its interests abroad, but the manner in which they will pursue them. This projected image is manifested in the manner, resources and aims in which Russia conducts its affairs.² While all nations, especially large powers act in varying and inconsistent manner toward different states and parts of the world, clearly definable patterns are usually present.

The centuries-old debate over what constitutes Russian society and what its political foundations should be has reemerged in the post-Soviet period. Although Russian politics remains essentially chaotic, many voices can be heard advocating the familiar positions of equally familiar disputes. The problem for the West is that the debate is not over yet. Russia has embarked on a new political journey toward a yet

² This can but does not need imply a foreign policy message or messianism but simply refers to the types of actions, political, military and economic that Russia uses to conduct foreign policy as well as any domestic constraints upon this conduct.

unknown destination.

B. THE WESTERNIZER-SLAVOPHILE DEBATE RENEWED

In the final two years of the Soviet Union, Russians of all political ilk, took up their tentative new-found freedoms of expression to discuss the political foundations of the state. This discussion ranged from an international best-selling book by Communist Party President Gorbachev to letters to the editor by hard-line Stalinist, Nina Andreyeva.³ This debate, which began in the late 1980's and which has yet to end, seeks to answer a two-fold question. First, what is the basis for the Russian state, and second, what is Russia's relationship to the world, especially Europe?

The debate, as Iver Neumann in *European Security* correctly notes is not "a unique response to the post-Soviet challenges" but is a recurring debate in the history of Russia.⁴ The multi-sided debate of the present have their roots in Tsarist-era arguments between Westernizers and Slavophiles running through ideological disputes within the Bolshevik government in the 1920's as well as *samizdat* writings of the 1960's which questioned the Communist Party's stranglehold on power.⁵ In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, two groupings, reminiscent of traditional divisions of Russian thought, emerged, gennerally refered to by scholars as the "Altanticists" and

³ See, Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, (Fontina, London), 1987. For the impact of the Andreyeva letter see, David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb, Last Days of the Soviet Empire*, (Vintage, New York), 1993.

⁴ Iver Neumann, "Russian Identity in the European Mirror," *European Security*, 3, no. 2, (Summer 1994).

⁵ *ibid.*

"Eurasianists."⁶ Although a useful starting point in which to enter the debate of Russian political thought, many Russian scholars see these two divisions as too simplistic to cover the variations of the espoused political ideals.

It is useful to generally sketch the basic differences between these two groups of thought. Atlantacists initially took over the ideological continuum of Westernizers of the 19th century who advocated Russia's incorporation into the Western or European world. Espousing a democratic orientation at the outset of the new Russian state, they also favored continuation of Gorbachev's "New Thinking" of cooperation with the West. Their hope was that cooperation would be the medium of exchange for expected extensive Western assistance and investment.

Eurasianists by contrast, opposed what they saw as an unproductive "junior partner" relationship that emerged with the Atlantacists policies. Russia was not, in this school of thought, a European power. Its allies and interests, as well as its potential threats, lay to the south and east. Moreover, by closely associating itself with the West, it was assuming a huge burden, both actual and potential, in exchange for few tangible benefits. At the cost of arms sales and the potential anger of its own Muslim minorities, this school argued that Russia had adopted an unnecessary policy of confrontation with the Middle East. Its gain for this was the empty promises of economic aid. Similarly, they such Russia ignoring its own interests in the Far East by allowing the West, once

⁶ See, Alexander Rahr, "Atlantacists versus Eurasians in Russian Foreign Policy," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 1, no. 22 (May 29, 1992): 17-22. Others have adopted this moniker to describe the various strains within Russian politics, for instance see, Alexei G. Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," *International Security*, 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 5-43.

again, to set and dominate the agenda.

This simple division does serve as a useful reference point, primarily because it articulates the basic themes and perceptions dividing the various political advocates. For, in general, neither positions implies an anti-democratic or pro-democracy stance nor is an expansionist or isolationist agenda inherent to either end of the spectrum; both subtle and stark gradations within each of these basic themes exist. In addition, domestic politics has often influenced the various schools of thought by modifying these positions for temporary political gain.

Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott expand this simple division by identifying four (and a possible fifth) schools of thought within these two basic groupings.⁷ Writing in 1993, the first school of thought identified was within the Westernizing school composed principally of pro-democracy forces. This group, which Dawisha and Parrott identify with President Yeltsin and former Foreign Minister Kozyrev, sought an "activist foreign policy but not an expansionist one."⁸ Hannes Adomeit essentially agreed but added in early 1995, that in spite of the basically pro-democratic orientation, this group accepted

⁷ Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia, the Politics of Upheaval*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994), p. 199. The German scholar Hannes Adomeit consolidates Dawisha and Parrott's five into four. Alexei Arbatov of the Center for Geopolitical and Military Forecasts in Moscow also has four domestic political groupings. His interpretation of their positions however is influenced more by his political involvement than are his Western counterparts. Prior to the collapse of the Union, Roman Szporluk saw essentially the same groups but divided into two groupings, "empire-savers" and "nation-state" advocates. The most telling thing about his division is that the groups, although they look at Russia's domestic structure, do so primarily to decide whether to fight to retain the territory of the Union.

⁸ *ibid.*

the need for a strong government, perhaps authoritarian, to overcome continuing economic difficulties and separatist tendencies. It has also evolved in its foreign policy thinking to see a need for an assertive foreign policy toward the "near abroad."⁹

It was this political position that was hailed by the Western world as the triumph of democracy in December 1991. Accolades quickly turned to complaints on both sides because of the difficulty in implementing the basic economic and political tenets of reform. Russia's extremely weak commercial infrastructure combined with a continuing misunderstanding of capitalism and market functions have produced severe economic hardships. Nor has the transition to political pluralism been an easy road either. The concept of a loyal opposition and the division of political power are taking root with difficulties. Yet acceptance of a market economy and political pluralism are necessary prerequisites to achieving the type of Westernization this school originally advocated.

This school of thought, and with it official Russian policy, appears to have believed that cooperation with the West in international affairs as well as a professed desire to integrate into Europe were the keys to the transformation of Russia. High profile policies such as privatization and cooperation within the United Nations were passed off as real reform as opposed to the needed creation of a legal basis for commercial activity, the protection of property and the promotion of individual political rights.¹⁰ The tempered economic reform inevitably led to hardship discrediting those

⁹ Hannes Adomeit, "Russia as a Great Power in World Affairs: Images and Reality," *International Affairs*, 71, no.1 (1995), p35-68.

¹⁰ For example see, Andrei Kozyrev, "The Lagging Partnership," *Foreign Affairs*, 73, no. 3 (May/June 1994): 59-71. In this essay, Kozyrev implores Russia and the United States to

individuals and policies that argued for the Westernization of Russia. The desire to be like the West failed because of general misunderstanding of Western democracy and economics.

The second school of thought is a quasi-democratic group of Eurasianists.¹¹ By its own admission, the operational tenets of this school of thought are not clearly developed but its focus is less on emulating the West and more on constructing a Great Power state centered on an ethnic Russian population. This population is not to be found solely within the confines of the current Federation and because of this, Moscow, they suggest, should and must have special rights to ensure the protection of minorities, Russian minorities specifically, everywhere in the former Soviet sphere. In addition, this school defines threats to Russia emanating from an "arc of crisis" running from the Caspian Sea through Transcaucasus to the Volga.

The former Yeltsin advisor closely associated with this school argued, as early as 1992, that Russia was in a unique position between East and West as well as between North and South, and therefore Russia must define its interests in terms of a new "mission" toward the south and east. The "Atlanticist" policies, they argued, Yeltsin *et al* were then pursuing would be "simply disastrous" to Russia. Stankevich argued instead

work together since they share both common democratic values and interests. Privatization is an important if not key component to market reform but the Russian program appears to be a very superficial privatization with many of the key industrial combines remaining essential in government hands.

¹¹ See, Sergei Stankevich, "Russia In Search of Itself," *The National Interest*, 28 (Summer 1992): 47-55. The extent of this group's democratic reform is debate as this author argues later.

that because Russia lacked a "sensible and formulated system of national interests" it would be dangerous to merely sign on as the West's junior partner.¹² More importantly, Russia lacked the traditional definitions of statehood and national interests and it was the role of foreign policy, rather than domestic politics that would help "Russia become Russia" by shaping the bounds and interests of statehood.¹³

In essence, Stankevich endorses the argument of "cultural marginality," since he suggests Russia is to be defined, not by its own ideals and beliefs but, by the manner in which it engages its neighbors. Security, in this view, takes primacy over domestic needs with one exception, the need to extend protection to all ethnic Russians. This vision is not of a democratic commitment to political pluralism, human rights or cooperation, but a self-defined and self-imposed role of "conciliator" for the Eurasian geopolitical sphere. Democracy is just but one form of government that could undertake this vision, but clearly the vision is more important than democracy. Russia's assumption of this role is automatic and it is up to Moscow alone to define its political limits. This conciliator role comes with the declaration of a strong and uncompromising stance toward the former Soviet states.¹⁴

The third school of thought is another Eurasianists-based school that is strongly isolationist and deeply opposed to the spread of Western or Oriental influences to Russia. Most notable among its proponents is Nobel Laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who, in 1990, began arguing for a new vision of Russian nationalism. His

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*, see the "Four Comments" to Stankevich's essay also in *The National Interest*, 28 (Summer 1992): 53-55.

brand of nationalism is more spiritual or mystic than that which has engulfed Europe and the world since the 19th century and he eschews the maintenance or quest for empire.¹⁵ This school of thought, writes Iver Neuman, sees "Russians as morally superior to people of the West because they have grown spiritually as they have been faced with hardships such as communism."¹⁶ And, although the West is richer, its brand of economics and multi-party politics would be detrimental for Russia. Indeed, they argue it was the copying of Western ideas from the Petrine period through the Soviet era that caused Russia much of its troubles. Russia must instead revitalize this moral superiority and structure its government in ways to take advantage of this characteristic.¹⁷ Within Solzhenitsyn's government, parties and political movements are unnecessary since the people, properly organized and structured, will make the correct political choices.¹⁸

Solzhenitsyn's pastoral regeneration for all its idyllic charm suggests little of substance beyond advocating the "democracy of a small area."¹⁹ Rather than advocating policies to define Russia's unique mission and spiritual destiny, Solzhenitsyn and many of his intellectual cohorts spent more energy defining what Russia should not be, Western

¹⁵ Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Rebuilding Russia, Reflections and Tentative Proposals*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York), 1991.

¹⁶ Neuman, p. 294.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the Russian intellectual rejection of Western democratic institutions in favor of a individual-based spiritual and moral-based social and political organization see, Richard Pipes, "Solzhenitsyn and the Russian Intellectual Tradition," in *Encounter*, (June 1979).

¹⁸ How Russia will develop this without political parties or how minority interests will be heard apparently does not concern Solzhenitsyn.

¹⁹ Solzhenitsyn, *Rebuilding Russia*.

in political and economic form. These corrupt and decaying concepts, in their view, need to be resisted. Yet for all his denunciations of empire and promotion of local democracy, Solzhenitsyn is decidedly imperialistic or at least intellectually condescending when he refuses to consider the political desires of all but a few Russian ethnic minorities.

The last of the prominent trends or schools of thought is a collage of former communists, extreme nationalists and other "hurrah patriots."²⁰ There is no formal ideology of this trend, much less an organized grouping. Rather, the basis of these beliefs rests upon the resentment and sense of loss that occurred with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The loss of respect and stature, combined with the economic hardship mistakenly attributed to capitalism have given rise to a variety of explanations for the USSR's demise ranging from the conspiratorial work of Jews and Freemasons to the sheer incompetence and treason of Mikhail Gorbachev. Whatever the source of the disaster that has befallen Russia, the majority feel it is not given ample recognition for its great power status. To varying degrees, all support or advocate that Russia dominate the former Soviet sphere, as well as the distancing of Moscow from Western powers. In addition, Russia should increase its contacts, principally military or military sales with former allies and clients of the Soviet Union, such as Serbia, Iraq, Libya and North Korea.

However cunningly realpolitik this group appears, their motivations are, to a large

²⁰ Although Dawasha and Parrot and Adomeit ascribe to a wide-range of groups with similar characteristics, Adomeit lumps all of these groups into one school of thought whereas the former differentiate between rightists and extremists. Adomeit's grouping, benefiting from three additional years of observation, is used here.

measure, a visceral reaction to their loss stature in the world, as well as a continued unacceptance of the fact that past and current failures of Russia's economy rest on their own shoulders and not within the manipulating fingers of unknown or unidentifiable Western bankers. Their aspirations for a reconstitution of the empire or reasserting of Russia's great power status are in many ways equally as irrational as their analysis of the cause of the collapse of the Soviet Union. More importantly, this group, like the majority of trends in Russia political development, seek to define Russian status and national interests by its place in the world and not by its domestic political construct.

C. SAME GAME, DIFFERENT RULES

The second aspect of cultural marginality is the external dynamic which involves the shaping of Russia's actions and manners of behavior in relation to the foreign power with whom it is engaged. As suggested in chapter two, because Russia lacks a guiding political philosophy, its internal political activity generates few national interests other than security on which to base its foreign discourse. In the same manner that its interests are shaped, Russia's inter-actions with foreign states also lack an internal check or a domestic political standard behavior. Moscow's actions are therefore often based on the regional or local standard of behavior of the engaged nation rather than to a standard of norms practiced by democratic or industrialized states. Although power plays a role in shaping the inter-action between Russia and a particular region, the influence of the political culture and norms of the regions can be seen to play at least an equal if not greater role. This aspect has generally held true for the course of Russian history, including the Soviet period when Communist utopianism tainted but did not essentially

change Moscow's manner of behavior.

The hypothesis suggested here is that Russia's standard of behavior can be seen to vary, not with its apparent interests or cross-border concerns but with the political culture that faces them from the opposite side of border. By understanding the prevailing political culture of a region and Moscow's perception of that culture it is possible to estimate Moscow's standard of behavior. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Russia's relations with the former Soviet Republics. In dealing with these new nations, Russian perceptions of these states as viable entities, as well as their status in the world, are shaping and legitimizing the standards of behavior that Moscow undertakes. Based to a large degree on the prevailing political culture found among the former Soviet Republics, four very different standards of behavior are present.

First among these approaches is the *Integrationist* effort. This standard of behavior is aimed toward the new states on Russia's western border, namely Ukraine and Belarus and, to some degree, Moldova. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, these states have received a significant amount of Western interest in the form of concern over their nuclear weapon holdings, potential commercial investment, potential integration into Europe and the settlement or rise of ethnic disputes. Russia's actions towards these states has been more closely scrutinized by Western states than comparable Russian action toward the Central Asian or Transcaucasian states. Efforts by Moscow to institutionalize closer political and economic ties have been viewed with extreme worry by observers who expected the imminent reemergence of the Imperial Russian bear.

Yet because these states are populated principally by Slavic people and because

they form Russia's link with the West, Russian action in this region has been conducted reasonably close to Western standards. Moscow, without doubt, has tried to exert its influence over these states, yet its reasons for doing so have not always been with the aim of Imperial reconstitution nor always with Western disapproval. The economic connections between the Russians and these states combined with the mistaken, but entirely Russian perception that these Slavic states should have an historical affinity for Russia, have motivated Moscow to encourage, promote and advocate greater political and economic integration under the rubric of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The levers used by Russia to influence these states have been traditional and accepted practices of Western behavior, even though the disputes, such as the transfer of nuclear weapons, the disposition of the former Soviet fleet and the untangling of a trans-national command economy, have never before been confronted in the West. Instead Russia's actions toward these states, although unsuccessful, have followed Western precedents toward greater integration in the military, economic and political fields.

The second approach is toward the Baltic states, another Western cultural outpost, and could be referred to as a *Legalist* undertaking. The three Baltic states, long a favorite Western tool to bash Soviet Imperialism, are perhaps more closely associated with the West than any of the former Republics to include Russia. Like Ukraine and Belarus, Russian interests in the Baltic states were, and remain to this day, extensive. Not the least of these interests are the significant numbers of ethnic Russians residing in the three states. In addition, other political and economic concerns include the disposition of the numerous military facilities, access to Kaliningrad and Baltic demands for payment for

past environmental damage. All are legitimate issues of concern and debate for Moscow.

In the end, after a spat of hard bargaining, Moscow removed its military forces, and neither paid for environmental damage nor received compensation for Soviet government property. On the issue of rights for ethnic Russians, Moscow also appears to have deflated its rhetoric once Western nations, most notably President Clinton, voiced criticisms of the Baltic states for citizenship regimes based on ethnicity and not residency. Unlike the western-most states of the former Soviet Union, Russia has made no or little effort to include any of the three Baltic states in any economic integration efforts. Rather, Russia's foreign policy standard of behavior toward these states has been marked by a legalist approach, they have generally abided by the rules of international diplomacy, restrained from any hostile or unduly threatening statements and have lived up to their agreements. The relations may not be friendly or even cordial, but they follow the accepted rules of international discourse.

This approach is not to suggest that Russia has not attempted to use its economic and political leverage against these states to achieve its designs, since it most certainly has done so, but these efforts are not outside the norms of Western diplomatic activity. In comparison, the manner of Moscow's actions is not significantly different than U.S. action toward Mexico or Japan over the last four years. In this comparison, both states have large economic and political interests in the other. Some of the overlapping issues include the continuation of military bases and local cost share of defense, immigration problems and uneven trading practices resulting in lost jobs or economic uncertainty. These comparisons aside, Russia is not the U.S., it has spent the last 70 plus years

occupying and oppressing its trading partners and neighbors and Washington, unlike Moscow is a stable democratic state.

A second telling aspect comes into play here and that is Russia's behavior elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. Away from the Western areas of the former Soviet Union and removed from nations that do not have at least a modicum of an European-based social and political culture, Russia also abandons its Western standards of behavior.

It is in the Central Asian states and Transcaucasus region where Russia's standard of behavior is decidedly non-Western, sparking some observers to see the return of imperialism. In both of these areas, Russia, without doubt, has failed to live up to internationally accepted norms of conduct. The standard of behavior, however, has varied between the two regions. In Central Asia, Russians look with disdain upon these new states, viewing them as artificial creations of the Communist regime bent on dividing potential sources of opposition rather than legitimate political units.²¹ Taken as a whole, Russia's standard of behavior in this region resembles the *post-colonialist* attitudes of Europeans although in many cases, its direct political involvement exceeds that of what Europe conducted in its former colonies in the 1950's and beyond.

On both a political and economic level, Russia has maintained exceedingly vast supra-national rights in nearly all of the Central Asian states. In Tajikistan, Russia's involvement led to the overthrow of a democratic regime as well as direct Russian military intervention in the civil war. Tellingly, the view of Tajikistan, in Russian eyes,

²¹ See, Solzhenitsyn, p. 7-9.

is not of an independent nation but as a Russian cultural barricade to prevent the encroachment of the Islamic world into Russia's sphere of political and economic influence.

Economically, Moscow has treated these nations with contempt demanding such things as the retention of their gold and hard currency reserves in Moscow in order to cover Russian loans and ruble transfers. Moreover, Russia promoted the concept of ruble-zone among the former Soviet Republics as means of ensuring and continuing the economic links. At first, this policy was helpful in generating the sale of Russian products in the new states but when this practice, which involved the easy availability of rubles, Moscow sharply restricted the flow of currency causing rapid inflation in these nations and forcing nearly all to embark on the expensive course of establishing their own monetary unit. With the exception of Tajikistan, where Russian military units have assumed the lion's share of policing the nation and ensuring the security of the regime, Moscow's actions have not necessarily been imperialistic but more accurately, contemptuous. Clearly, Moscow does not feel the Central Asia states, run by the old-line *nomenklatura*, are truly worthy of their independent status, as demonstrated by their actions.

In the Caucasus region by contrast, Russia's neighbors are not "artificial creations" or tribal relations but ethno-nationalist states with a long, albeit broken, history of independence and self-rule. These nations have also not been historically hostile to Russia; two of these states, Georgia and Armenia are predominately Christian nations that have periodically sought Moscow's help and protection against the Turkic and

Islamic peoples to the south. None of the states in the region have, in any sense, a strong connection to Western political culture. Religious, clan and cultural affiliation have been the principal influence on alliance formation; within each state, factions engaged in internal fighting have both turned to and been manipulated by outside powers, such as Russia, Turkey or Iran (and their historical predecessors).

Here, one could categorize Russia's past and present history as that of an *interventionist*. Moscow routinely intervenes through means beyond the norms of Western diplomatic behavior to gain leverage or alliance with one or more of the groups within the nation.²² Its motivations have varied from, perceived Imperial destiny, fear of a rival's advance or economic incentives. Nonetheless, Russia publicly respects the sovereignty of these states even while it seeks to develop and support internal opposition groups or pro-Russian factions. The current methods, as discussed in chapters three and four involve supporting coups, ethnic irredentist movements and separatist movements. In addition, Russia has sought to use economic and fiscal leverage to be granted sweetheart arrangements in oil and gas prospecting and it has also sought to clarify accords on the Caspian to effectively neutralize any legal claim of ownership of mineral assets that would reduce its own gain. Although Russia's actions demonstrate that it will exercise its power in its self-proclaimed sphere of influence, for the Caucasus region, Moscow does extend some recognition of statehood. It is not the Western definition of statehood but a more Byzantine or medieval standard of behavior that governs its own

²² This is not to suggest Western nations have not or do not intervene but that Russia's style of intervention, as discussed later, involves methods that are presently beyond the bounds of accepted diplomatic activity in the West.

actions.

D. THE BEAR AS A CHAMELEON

In this brief chapter, the intent has not been to provide an in-depth comparative analysis of Russian political culture with that of its neighbors, using Western standards as norms. Rather, it has been a thumbnail sketch of how the lack of an abiding and accepted political culture has impacted Russian foreign policy.

The initial influence comes from the fallout of the debate over what defines Russia's political core. Because these debates have been framed historical in West versus East manner, foreign policy has often reflected the desire or need of Russia to emulate, usually in the case of the West, or strike out on its own chosen direction. Since this debate over what should form the core of the Russian polity has yet to be answered, it is difficult to develop from its political institutions a coherent set of foreign policy objectives.

Without domestic motivations or constraints on its foreign actions, Russia has and continues to deal with foreign nations "in-kind." To those nations visible to or having a Western political structure, its actions have been approaching Western norms. Elsewhere, in areas that are neither visible to the West or closely connected by political culture, Russia acts in decidedly non-Western ways. The confusion arising among foreign states when the boundaries within Russian minds do not overlap with Western interest has generated much concern and apprehension within the West.

VII.MOVING BEYOND CONTAINMENT

The British military historian and strategist, B.H. Liddell-Hart wrote, in his treatise on strategy, that the aim in war is a better state of peace.¹ Although he acknowledged that better was up to the victors to define, he argued it was "essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace [desired]."² Victory in his argument was not measured in battles won or fields carried but in the emergence of a stable peace once the guns fell silent. For a nation to achieve this end-state, Liddell-Hart proposed that a state's action needs to be guided by a Grand Strategy that fuses its military, political, economic and moral resources.

In his work, Liddell-Hart's focus was principally on "hot" wars, yet his premise, that the focus of a nation's strategy should be on a stable peace, is equally as relevant to cold wars and peacetime as it is to traditional conflicts. In a Cold War or in peacetime, states, in a manner similar to war, use military and political action to prevent war and generate an atmosphere that favors their political objectives.

The basic conceptual notion of Grand Strategy suggested by Liddell-Hart provides an analytic reference point to explore and examine the ongoing transition of United States' foreign policy toward Russia. Rather than trying to critique past and ongoing U.S. policy, this chapter seeks to place the discussion of U.S.-Russian relations into a strategic framework, both past and future. Specifically, what type of peace did American grand strategy try to create during the Cold War, if any? From this starting

¹ B. H. Liddell-Hart, *Strategy*, (Praeger, New York, 1967) p. 338.

² *ibid.*

point, the discussion will move to the transition from the Cold War to a post-Cold War peace and what, if any strategies, the United States can bring to bear to help craft a "better state of peace."

A. THE LEGACY OF CONTAINMENT

Four years after the end of the Cold War, the transition away from Containment as the cornerstone of U.S. policy toward Russia is both far from complete and uncertain in its ultimate direction. The abandonment of this strategy, which guided American action for nearly forty-five years, has proven to be a difficult task for two presidential administrations. In part, this difficulty stems from the tremendous success of the strategy of Containment. Although each of the eight presidential administrations that adopted its tenets interpreted and applied Containment in different manners, all sought the same general ends, to defend Europe and the balance of the free world from Communist aggression and induce a shift in Soviet behavior toward international norms. The fulfillment of these objectives in the late 1980's left the United States seeking to defend a new status quo just as this political situation was coming completely unraveled. To grasp the difficulty of the transition it is important to understand the development and objectives of America's Containment strategy.

The benefits of geography and wealth have, for over two centuries, more than compensated for the United State's traditional reluctance to develop a coherent Grand Strategy in dealing with potential adversaries. Moreover, for the United States, war and diplomacy have frequently been viewed as distinctly separate endeavors in sharp contrast to Liddell-Hart's suggestion that these are mutually supportive and intertwined activities.

Often preoccupied with unconditional military victory, the United States has all too often failed to create a grand strategy which focused both military and political efforts toward the objective of a better state of peace.

The threat of Soviet domination over Western Europe, which quickly developed into an equally dangerous nuclear threat to North America, forced the United States to respond in an uncharacteristic manner by developing a policy which reached across a broad spectrum of political and economic means in addition to purely military endeavors. The Soviet atomic arsenal, in effect, limited America's acceptable or traditional range of military action. The far-reaching response to the emerging Soviet threat was the grand strategy of "Containment."³ Criticized at first for "surrendering" East Europe to Communism, Containment evolved into the cornerstone of American diplomatic, economic and military activities for every Presidential administration from Truman to Bush. While this bi-partisan foreign policy combined political, economic and military aspects, it had for its principal aim, not a "better state of peace" but maintenance of the status quo and the prevention of a Communist dominated Europe.⁴ Prevention of further

³ No single set of policy documents or public statements clearly define the beginnings or the scope of Containment. For this thesis, two National Security Council documents, NSC-20 and NSC-68 are used to express the Strategic objectives the U.S. hoped to obtain. It is not to suggest these objectives produced a universal set of action but that they constitute the basic tenants of the Grand Strategy of Containment that were to hold until the end of the Cold War. For a discussion on the origins of the Cold War and U.S. policy from 1944 onward see, Stephen E. Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, (Penguin, New York, N.Y.) 1984.

⁴ The objectives stated here are from NSC-20 in *The Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C.) vol. 1, part 2, p. 662. Hereafter *FRUS* and in NSC-68 in *FRUS* 1950, vol. 1, p. 234. The author of NSC-68, Paul Nitze also provides an assessment of Containment's aims in "Grand Strategy Then and Now: NSC-68 and its Lessons For the Future," in *Strategic Review*, (Winter 1994), p. 12-19. See also, John

Soviet advances was based on the recognition that the cost of war, both conventional and thermonuclear far exceeded the potential gain. Because of the high cost, the architects of Containment sought to deter Soviet aggression by promoting economic development, democratic pluralism as well as by establishing a potent conventional military deterrence to further aggression.

Beyond the immediate defense of Europe and Japan, it was also hoped that the "contagious ideas of freedom" combined with the economic and military might of the West would eventually induce a shift in Soviet behavior towards international respected norms subsequently lessening the ideological conflict to more acceptable levels.⁵ "The original Kennan-Nitze strategy," wrote the Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis, "sought to encourage Soviet leaders ultimately to change their own system from within."⁶ The role of the United States however was not to force this change upon the Soviets but to "create the external circumstances that would cause them to [change]."⁷ Even this hope was tempered by the recognition that only a fundamental change in the Soviet system of government was likely to permanently end the tensions between the United

Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War, Implications, Reconsideration, Provocations*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1992).

⁵ *FRUS* 1950.

⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War, Implications, Reconsideration, Provocations*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1992). p. 39. The documents Gaddis references are the "X" letter by George Kennan and NSC-20 and 68 drafted by Kennan and Nitze respectfully.

⁷ *ibid.*

States and the Soviet Union.⁸

By the late 1980's, the external environment Containment created, combined with the abysmal decline in the Soviet Union's economic prospects, forced the Soviet leadership, personified by Mikhail Gorbachev, to undertake just the moderation of their behavior suggested by the NSC policy documents. In an effort to arrest the growing economic, military and technical gap between the Soviet Union and the West, Gorbachev was forced to initiate a series of moves that would have seemed, not just unlikely, but fantastic only a few years earlier. To slow the pace of Western military improvement, Cold War tensions were eased through new arms control measures. And foreseeing the coming unraveling of the Warsaw Pact, Gorbachev all but abandoned Eastern Europe, agreeing to the reunification of Germany, the dismantling of the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe. Domestically, Gorbachev instituted a series of liberal reforms in an effort to jump-start the faltering economy. The openings he created however resulted in the undermining of the Communist Party's hold on power and eventually produced the unraveling of the USSR.

In the span of four years, the Soviet Union modified its foreign policy from a decidedly belligerent stance toward NATO and the West to acceptance of a reunified Germany that remained within NATO. The strategic objectives of Containment, outlined forty years earlier in NSC-68 were essentially accomplished by early 1990. The United States did not change its strategic objectives in relation to the Soviet Union at this juncture because the enormity of the change was tempered by doubts to the ultimate

⁸ *FRUS* 1950.

sincerity and ability of the Kremlin to continue this cooperation.⁹

Moreover, the developing cooperation from Moscow over international issues and the fear of a potential return to a more belligerent totalitarian rule left the United States unwilling to challenge the newly developed status quo by seeking even greater changes from Moscow. Washington was unwilling to risk the reduction in tensions to champion the independence of the Soviet Republics, encourage the rise of democratic forces or assist the movement toward a free market economy.

At the Cold War's most critical moment, its end, the United States was without a strategy aimed at obtaining and securing a stable Post-Cold War peace. The reasons why are varied. First, Containment, having served the nation well since the 1940's, offered no clues to the United States as to what the "better state of peace" for a post-Cold War world would entail. Although its framers recognized that an ultimate end required a new Soviet system of government, Containment's objectives were not designed to force a change in the Soviet system of government but merely in its external behavior. Since its objectives were, for all practical purposes, fulfilled by 1990, there was neither an existing guide or perceived need to develop a strategy that would ensure continued peaceful cooperation.

Second, a common theme running through 20th century American history is the expected triumph of political democracy and the free-market. George Bush, like the framers of NSC-68, believed that a democratic government in Russia would, because of its very nature, end political conflict with the United States. What these different

⁹ For example, *Soviet Military Power 1990*, suggests the process of change in the Soviet Union was in its infancy and its ultimate course unpredictable.

individuals overlooked was that a Russian democracy was unlikely to emerge as a "bolt out of the blue" or that a democratic Russia because of its cultural, ethnic and historical differences would not articulate its national interests in ways the U.S. failed to understand or believed to be hostile.

It was not until after the collapse of the Soviet Union that the United States recognized the vital need to assist Russia in a difficult and slow transition away from its totalitarian past to a democratic future. Although this assistance is critical for the preservation of a stable post-Cold War peace, the perception from the United States of a democracy victorious over Communism skewed the nature of America's support. Rather than assisting in the development of a political and economic environment in which democracy and capitalism could flourish, the United States sought to maintain a new status quo, the preservation of a perceived democratic government in Russia. In many aspects, this policy is an extension of Containment. The major difference is that rather than containing Soviet aggression, it seeks to contain the political, economic and military instability arising from a collapsed Soviet state.

The legacy of Containment is not that it was the wrong or failed policy, for it was clearly instrumental in achieving the environment in which Cold War victory was possible, but that America clung to it for far too long. At the moment in history, the late 1980's, when the United States should have moved beyond Containment to a new strategy, the nation basked instead in Containment's success. Perhaps the most difficult part about the Cold War is the difficulty in deciding when it is over but clearly, when it approached its end, the United States did not heed the advice of Liddell-Hart to "fight the

war with constant regard to the peace desired" but chose instead to take the first peace that came along.

B. THE NEED FOR A NEW GRAND STRATEGY

The purpose of NSC-68, wrote Paul Nitze its principal drafter, was to provide an organized approach to confront the threats facing the United States during the Cold War.¹⁰ These threats, Nitze and many others point out, are gone. The Cold War saw a number of premature notices about its end, but with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is truly over. No one however, should take this to suggest that political and military conflict between Russia and the United States is a thing of the past, for it is certainly not. The difference is any future rivalry between the two will be based on issues and principles far different than the ideological conflict of the Cold War.

Four years beyond the end of the Cold War, the nature of the peace and the international system emerging from the ideological conflict are still evolving. So too is the range of potential conflicts and areas of cooperation between the former Cold War rivals. Whether this transition produces a new order of stability or a return of troublesome historical conflicts through Europe and Asia will, in part, rest on the actions and inactions of the United States. A central part, if not the linchpin of any post-Cold War order rests on the outcome of Russia's own political transition and the way this evolution affects its neighbors.¹¹ Equally as critical is the way the United States

¹⁰ Paul Nitze, "Grand Strategy Then and Now: NSC-68 and its Lessons For the Future," in *Strategic Review*, (Winter 1994), p. 12-19.

¹¹ For a contrasting view, see William Odom and Robert Dujarric, *Commonwealth or Empire? Russia, Central Asia and the Transcaucasus*, (Indianapolis, Hudson Institute) 1995.

perceives the transition within Russia.

The direction of Russia's political transition will have significant bearing on the shape of the post-Cold War peace for several important reasons. First, without Russia's participation, no cooperative security regime can emerge for all Europe. Eastern Europe states will not view a democratic transition of Russia in and of itself as a sufficient guarantee that Moscow will not meddle in their affairs. An articulated security agreement that minimizes the use of force and creates incentives for cooperation is vital to placate the fears of these states and a democratic government provides the best hope for concluding a long-term stable security regime. A hostile Russia or the fears of a hostile Russia could generate the demand for and the extension of NATO's security guarantee eastward; but while this may produce short-term stability, it is unlikely to produce a permanent reduction in political conflict. Second, Russia poses the only legitimate nuclear threat to the United States over the near-term. Moreover, the extent of nuclear facilities, material and bomb-making knowledge present a lucrative source for other nations seeking these weapons. If Russia were to fall into extreme chaos or internal instability, control over any of these dangerous assets would be extremely fluid. Last, is the recognition that the United States has an extremely limited ability to influence events in Russia; because of this, America must ensure its policy toward Russia is highly coordinated and not merely an ad hoc collection of interests that present conflicting and

These authors argue it is up to the West to craft a security policy that will inhibit the Imperial reconstitution efforts of Russia. While this writer believes the West could create such a system without Russia involvement, only Russia cooperation would guarantee a non-confrontational security system.

contradictory signals.

The challenge to the United States today, will be to formulate a new Grand Strategy that will help create an environment where international differences are settled peacefully, where economic exchange is unhindered, where political democracy flourishes and respect for ethnic and cultural minorities is so widely-held that grievances from these groups do not manifest in a resort to arms. In order to formulate a new grand strategy, the United States must clarify its fundamental objectives and in addition, seek to understand the intentions and motivations of Moscow. First among these two is the establishment of American priorities.

The objectives of the United States fall into five broad, but easily definable categories. The first broad objective is to create an international environment that fosters democratic governments as well as offering support and assistance to nations seeking a genuine transition to democracy. Second, is the promotion of market-based economies that are integrated into a world free trading system. Third, is the promotion of regional and global security agreements that both deter aggression and provide organizational forums for the reduction of tensions. Fourth is the promotion of international agreements on reducing, limiting and control the spread of weapons of mass destruction and long-range delivery systems. Last, is the continuation of nuclear, chemical and conventional arms agreements with the Russia.¹² None of the policies is clearly or overtly Russia specific, nor should they be, for America's interests in establishing international security

¹² Most of these agreements date to the Soviet period and considerable effort has been made to get the Russians to agree to continue the various accords.

must be predicated on our own interests and beliefs.

C. THE IMPACT OF PERSISTENT FACTORS

If the first step in establishing American policy toward Russia is the establishment of clear priorities, the second is ascertaining the intentions and motivations of Moscow. As this thesis suggests, ascertaining Russian objectives in a vacuum is far from easy and frequently misleading. The most prevalent views of Russia, suggested in the opening of this thesis, see either a return to its sinister authoritarian past or the actions of a great power seeking to fill power vacuums along its borders. Each of these views is a distortion of reality based more upon the desires and intentions of the opinion holder than on Russia's actions. Along with acceptance of either of these positions as the source of Russian actions comes a de facto choice of a grand strategy for dealing with Russia. By contrast, viewing Russian actions in terms of the interplay between long-standing geographic, cultural and ethnic "persistent factors," provides a far more satisfying explanation, but no corresponding grand strategy. It does however, offer a wider range of foreign policy options for the United States. A brief comparison of the three approaches is obviously in order here.¹³ Once again, by focusing on the Caucasus region the differences between the three approaches are clarified.

In explaining the actions in the Caucasus region, there is little disagreement among the various commentators of the extent of Russian action. Almost immediately

¹³ For purposes of clarity and simplicity, this discussion will not offer a detailed comparison but instead a summation of the general points inherent with each view. Although this may seem to fall short of the mark in explaining Russian actions, in discussions aimed at generating a grand strategy for the United States the general trends of Russian motivation more than suffice.

after the break up of the Soviet Union, and some would suggest even before that, Moscow has conducted both an overt and covert policy designed to extend and maintain its power and influence in the region. Whether Russia created or merely fueled the various regional conflicts is debatable, but clearly Moscow's fingerprints can be found on the fighting in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan, Chechnya and Ingushia. In each conflict, Russia, through direct and indirect involvement, has altered the political landscape and, with the exception of Chechnya, produced a more favorable political situation for itself.

For those inclined to view Russia slipping back into a past of authoritarian repression and external conquest, the developments in the Caucasus are seen as one of the first steps toward the reconstruction of the Russian/Soviet empire.¹⁴ By contrast, proponents of international relations theory would suggest Russia is acting as any great power would in moving to fill a power vacuum along its frontiers in order to block the rising influence of more extreme or dangerous states such as Iran or Turkey.¹⁵ Although these actions may cause the United States isolated trouble, such as problems in exporting oil and gas, in the long run, holders of this view suggest that these moves are simply the

¹⁴ Several commentators have argued this line of reasoning, for example see, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs*, 73, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 1994): 67-82, and Fiona Hill and Pamela Jewett, *Back in the USSR, Russia's Intervention in the Internal Affairs of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia*. (Harvard University Ethnic Conflict Project, 1994), Mark Smith, *Pax Russica: Russia's Monroe Doctrine*, (The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies).

¹⁵ For representative views on this position see, Stephen Sestanovich, "Giving Russia Its Due," *The National Interest*, 36 (Summer 1994): 3-13, and Stephen Sestanovich, "Andrei The Giant," *The New Republic*, 210 no. 15, (April 11, 1994):24-27.

stabilization of the international environment within the region.

Viewing Russia's actions in the Caucasus region as part of an effort to regain a lost empire creates incentives for the United States to adopt a comfortable and familiar policy of Containment, or Neo-Containment. If Russia does seek to expand outward, then the appropriate response would be to use the current advantages the West holds in political, economic and military power to block these moves. Proponents of this view would argue for an immediate and extensive enlargement of NATO to the east as well as economic and political support to key states such as Poland, Ukraine and Georgia. Efforts to engage Russia across a wide spectrum of economic and political issues would be curtailed or, in a more Machiavellian approach, used to wring concessions from Moscow. The shortcomings of this view and its resultant strategy is that it ignores the underlying causes of conflict in the region and, equally as important, it sacrifices America's already limited ability to influence events in Russia in order to obtain a wider coalition in a new round of Containment.

Similar criticisms are waged at the purveyors of the view of great power response. Here too, the origins of fighting are overlooked because the conflict is seen in a state to state context as opposed to an ethnic and cultural dynamic. Approaching these problems from a nation-state dynamic blinds the viewer to the relationship between ethnic and cultural groups that transcend national boundaries. Additionally, by concentrating solely on state-generated threats, it also overlooks the very real fears of the spread of cultural and political ideas between these groups. This self-imposed limiting perspective places restraints both on the understanding of the ongoing problems and in our ability to assist

in the solution for these problems. Like those that prescribe a fixed deterministic motivation to the Russian psyche, this approach limits our ability to influence internal events by removing the actors critical to the conflict from the equation.

The view of the Caucasus conflict from the third perspective of "porous frontier" is, unfortunately imminently more complicated, since it takes in to account the interplay of history, cultural and ethnicity. Moscow's actions look decidedly less threatening from this perspective although no less troubling. Meddling in the Caucasus, whether covert assistance to the NKAO Armenians or "interventionist peacekeeping" in Georgia, Russia appears to be motivated more by a desire to prevent further disintegration as opposed to a wish to expand its state boundaries. Critics of this theory can and will quickly claim this interpretation is merely a reincarnated version of the Cold War apology that suggested Soviet expansion was due to a national paranoia stemming from a fear of invasion.

Critics notwithstanding, there are significant differences between the two. Cold War apologists sought to use the emotional capital of well-known invasions of Russia in the 19th and 20th centuries to justify an equally horrendous invasion in the opposite direction. The perspective of porous frontier identifies the source of the threat as internal as opposed to external. The arose because of the nature of Russian expansion running over several centuries and created significant enclaves of peoples who do not desire to be part of the Russian state but fall within its borders. For some, like the Chechens, this desire is strong and visibly manifested. Others such as the Dagastanis or Tatars have used less pronounced methods to increase their sovereignty. Yet in all cases, the minority people are seeking ways to distances themselves from Russian control.

Russia's fears of further disintegration therefore are far from a paranoid fantasy. This concern of course does not excuse their violent meddling in their neighbors affairs or the brutal suppression of its own citizens, but it is nonetheless a realistic fear and motivation for their actions. It does however provide a realistic basis for understanding Russian motivation and from this, a base of knowledge upon which to create foreign policy.

The sharp differences among the competing views of Russia can also be found in their approach to understanding the attempt of Russia to transition to democracy and free-markets. Although the United States has articulated the fundamental importance of supporting Russian shift to democratic capitalism, neither of these commonly held views incorporates the interplay of economic and democratic reforms to foreign policy. The role of the various cultural and ethnic groups within Russia toward shaping a policy are also not included in the calculus. Ignoring these factors as motivations can produce a distorted view of Moscow's intentions.

Economic motives in Russian foreign policy are also clearly present, as they are in every nation's foreign policy. Russia however is vastly different than most nations, especially Western capitalistic democracies; not only does it have little practical experience in working within a free-market system, but legally and psychologically the nation is unprepared for a market economy. In the seventy years of Communism, only criminal mafia's operating the black market and along the edge of society had any practical experience in capitalism. It is not surprising that in a nation where the legal foundations for property and commerce are shaky and often conflicting, that criminal

gangs willing to break the law have emerged as the principal engine of the market economy. Although these enterprises drive the economy, they have generated a new climate of corruption that far surpasses the excesses of the Communist Party in its heyday. The result is the reenforcement of the perception that capitalism is by nature predatory, that in every deal there must be a loser to balance the winner.

The multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of Russian society also serves as an explanatory guide to Moscow's foreign and domestic policy. The lingering tensions between non-Russian ethnic groups that identify with Islamic or Oriental cultural lay at the root of Moscow's fears of further disintegration. These account for Russian efforts to shield the Federation from contagious ideas by undermining the stability of the nations along its borders. Moscow obviously believes that by supporting rebellious minorities within these states it can keep them weak, too weak to serve as models or offer assistance to the Caucasian republics of the Russian Federation.

Internally, the same fears of disintegration that arise from a conflict of cultures and ethnic groups give rise to the fears that a move toward greater democratic reforms would produce a similar splintering of the nation. typifying this battle is the clash between the regional governments and the central government which has been a continuous struggle since the Soviet Union's demise. There is little doubt that greater democratic reforms and increased autonomy would increase the demands of ethnic groups, especially in the North Caucasus, for outright independence.

Enemies and adversaries do exist and frequently nations need little perceptive power to understand the threat posed by another nation or group. When correct or

generally so, perceptions help a state shape and mold a response. When wrong, perceptions can generate policies that hinder rather than secure national interests and more dangerously create rivals where none may exist. If the perceptions of Russia suggested by the discussion of the "persistent factors" that affect its domestic and foreign policy hold true, the American policy prescription needs to be far different than it does for the belief of Russia poised to expand.

D. THE FOUNDATIONS OF A NEW STRATEGY

The objectives of the United States in the post-Cold War world, suggested by this thesis, involve the promotion and obtainment of a stable international environment that fosters democratic governments and free-market economies. No one nation, to include Russia, presents an immediate and fundamental threat to current Western democracies or the emerging democracies. Russia will, however, because of its broad swath, influence the development of democracies on nearly all of the world's continents. Instability in Russia, resulting in an economic collapse or internal anarchy, can undo the gains made by democracy in the Cold War, if only through the heightening of the fears and defense budgets of many of the newly free nations.

To preserve the gains of the Cold War and to move beyond Containment's goals toward the creation of a better state of peace, the United States must seek to assist a Russian transition to a stable democratic and market oriented nation. This assistance does of course involve military concerns, but it is foremost a political problem calling for a coordinated political and economic response. The foundations of a new strategy must take into account both U.S. objectives and the obvious state of affairs within Russia. To

achieve these ends, the United States must rely on two policy pillars, respect for human rights and the establishment of economic property rights and the rule of law concerning commercial affairs. The first is principally a philosophic guide aimed at capturing the moral and ethical high ground. There is also a fundamentally practical purpose for publicly articulating these rights as a foundation of foreign policy since without basic toleration of human rights, the transition to democracy will be incomplete. A stable economic transition is also required for the emergence of a Russian democracy. The foremost pitfalls in this economic transition are not the oft-stated problems of the slowed rate of privatization, rapid inflation or fall of the ruble, but the much more fundamental problem of Russian law that makes any real effort at commerce illegal in some form or the another. The lack of protection for economic transactions and the frequent and conflicting decrees covering business have fostered a climate of corruption that promotes capital flight undermining the economic well-being of society.

To influence the Russian internal transition, the foremost pillar of a new U.S. strategy involvement must be the promotion of human rights as a key foundation of American policy. The United States must be an out-spoken advocate of rights for minority ethnic groups and oppose all efforts aimed at denying or restricting rights to national groups.

For many, the notion of a human rights-based foreign policy harkens dreadful images of a hypocritical American government meddling in other's affairs at the expense of our own national interests. The post-Cold War world, however, is a far different place where the many conflicts of the world and, indeed of Russia, are based around issues of

nationality, ethnicity and competing cultures. To those involved, these visceral bonds allow for little room for negotiated compromises. A strongly argued United States policy which promotes tolerance of minorities would be a key moral starting point for assisting in the settlement of the many conflicts.

More practical reasons also abound. Foremost among these is Moscow's policy of proclaiming itself as the defender of the 25 million ethnic Russians found outside its borders. The potential for Russia to use this issue as a pretext for various forms of intervention are numerous. Russia could also use these ethnic kin as leverage to extract favorable economic or political conditions. Moscow's concern for the human rights of Russians abroad is not matched by a corresponding respect for rights of other nationalities within its own borders. By adopting a policy that promotes human rights, the United States has a strategy that cuts both ways, limiting Russian one-sided efforts to exploit this issue for its own gain. President Clinton's speech in the Baltic's in the summer of 1994 advocating political vice ethnic based citizenship show the power of this policy in reducing tensions and welding influence.

Advocating human rights is also viewed as a policy that produces few results while making the United States appear weak in the face of blatant disregard of policy. In Russia this policy holds significant potential for creating political leverage. Moscow's principal security suggested here is further disintegration along ethnic and cultural cleavages. The opportunity for exploiting these fears and turning them to a U.S. advantage can be done through promotion of human rights of one or more of the various nationalities within the Soviet Union. Such an opportunity to leverage human rights

concerns into practical policy results emerged with the invasion of Chechnya. The blatant lying by senior Russian officials and the blatant killing of civilians was not condemned by Western nations. Yet the invasion practically coincided with IMF and World Bank lending efforts to Russia. Varying the criticism of human rights offenses could have enabled Western leaders to extract greater reforms in the Russian economy to the benefit of both Western companies and Russian society.

The very real possibility that the government that follows Yeltsin will be more authoritarian, perhaps along the lines of Pinochet style government, also makes the enunciation of human rights as U.S. policy goal an important tool for tempering the potential excess of a future government. Direct U.S. government aid or loan guarantees could be made contingent on respect for human rights as potential incentive.

The second pillar of a U.S. policy must be the push for Russia to greater economic reforms. It is vitally if not critically important that the multitude of decrees and laws concerning commercial enterprise be streamlined. Private and intellectual property must receive legal safeguards and protection. The climate of corruption that the absence of the legal safeguards create threatens the very foundation of Russian society. The conspicuous wealth being generated by certain organizations operating on the margins of the law merely hides the true poverty of the economic situation of the nation.

Russia offers vast opportunities for international business. In the near term, the primary Russian commodities of value to the West are raw materials. Although Russia holds abundant reserves in oil, gas and other minerals, much of their potential is lost due to waste, corruption and mismanagement. The victims are the Russian people and the

global environment.

The dangers of Russia's economic decline and the rise of powerful criminal organizations are a far greater threat to U.S. security than are pirated compact disks in China or the absence of U.S. made mufflers in Japan. The U.S. must take the lead, through the G-7, to tie Western economic aid and investment to Russia's willingness to establish the legal, tax and property reform necessary for a prosperous business climate.

When the Cold War ended, the estimates of the need for Western aid to restore the Russian economy ranged from the tens to hundreds of billions of dollars. Four years later, the flight of nearly 100 billion dollars from Russia suggests that the solution to Russia's economic problems is not a repeat of the Marshall plan with its capital infusion. The solution is for Russia to adopt the opportunity freedom provides to create the necessary legal and social changes necessary for economic opportunity to flourish. Until such time, Western investment and aid will continue to disappear in the black hole of corruption.

It has proven extremely difficult for America to move beyond Containment's familiar and understandable tenets. Even the pro-democracy or pro-Yeltsin policies smack of a modified Containment, this time aimed at containing instability rather than ideology. The post-Cold War order is clearly not fixed and the present marks merely a transition to ultimate end. To protect the investment of the last forty-five years, the United States must move beyond Containment and design the "better state of peace" that constitute the ultimate Cold War victory.

VIII. CONCLUSION: ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTION

A mere three years separates the stunning image of the hammer and sickle being hauled down from the Kremlin to the raising of the Russian flag at the burned-out hulk of the Chechen parliament building in Grozny. In this short span, the hope of a constructive partnership between Russia and the United States has diminished, while fears of a renewal of antagonisms and a resurgent and expanding Russia have surfaced. The question this thesis sought to engage was whether this stark choice, between democracy and totalitarianism, alone, accounts for the actions and motivations of Russian foreign policy. As this writer has endeavored to show, there are numerous domestic and foreign influences on Russian policy and these influences, by their very nature, are likely to exist regardless of the type of government that obtains power in Moscow.

A brief recap of these factors demonstrates how neither end of the political spectrum can escape their influence. The influence of *Porous Borders* is that it challenges traditional notions of national security. It is not merely the potential threat of armies poised to invade across inviting terrain but the uncontrollable flow of people and ideas. In areas that are predominately non-Russian in ethnicity, the ideas of ethno-nationalism create and reinforce the desire of greater political independence, be that independence or autonomy within a Federal system. Other infectious ideas, both good and bad, such as democracy, human rights and religious tolerance or intolerance come with this flow of people. Increasingly they come in other forms such as E-mail and faxes. Crime also follows this flow, especially when the climate fostered by national tax laws and regulations creates incentives for doing business outside of the law.

Democracy is likely to increase the porousness of Russia's borders. If it is embraced, much good could come of the free flow of goods, ideas and services across international boundaries. The increased devolution of power from the center to the periphery is likely to occur as well. A failure to embrace this opening would necessitate tremendous costs, perhaps a curtailment of democracy for a minor gains. There is also a down-side; criminal trafficking of drugs and other illegal, as well as legal, materials are likely to occur unless economic and commercial reforms accompanying the acceptance of open borders.

At the other end of the spectrum, an Imperial revival does not negate the impact of porous borders, instead it merely replicates the past problems of Russia and the Soviet Union. A new Russian empire is unlikely to be democratic in content or character necessitating the imposition of strict controls over potential sources of political opposition. The flow of ideas, difficult enough to stem during the Soviet period, has becoming increasingly, if not impossible, to interdict after several years of unrestricted access. Faxes, E-mail and cellular phones may not have made the world a small community, but they have made it difficult for dictators and rulers to hide their murderous rampages.

Any fears of renewed and resurgent Imperial Russia also fails to take into account one of the prime reasons for the Soviet Union's decay, a near complete economic collapse. Moreover, little suggests that Russia will overcome its *Economic Inferiority* in the near future. Businesses and the *novue riche* do abound in Russia; however, both structurally and psychologically, Russians have yet to travel far down the road toward

market capitalism. Perhaps the military industrial complex could be revived to their former standing, although this is doubtful. Even so, the lot of average Russians will continue to decline and the easy sources of past revenue, natural resources, are becoming increasingly costly to extract and transport to market. This decline in production combined with the loss of resources during transport, will force Russia to choose between hard currency and military arms. Both will require money and technology, inputs that Russia is sorely lacking.

The economic gains made over the past three years have, to some extent, been lost to the criminalization of the economic. Absence any legal protections for economic endeavors, legitimate businessmen have been overtaken taken by or incorporated into criminal organizations. It is these organizations that run the nation's banks and businesses and which also form the nation's venture capitalists. Also as part of this, regulation and license have nearly ceased being based on governmental rule but on official corruption.

A democracy could overcome these problems by reforming many of the structural problems of the economy and allowing unfettered and unhindered foreign investment, especially in the critical fields of resource production and transportation. In time, democracy will be strengthened. Also, economic insecurity could be reduced through the profitability of Western joint-ventures, and with a revived economy the weak social safety net could be improved.

An imperial-minded regime, be they of the extreme left or right, would not be immune from the lingering effects of economic inferiority. Expansion of the nation or

merely its military force and rhetoric would be extremely costly as the aftermath of the Chechen invasion as shown. An expansion of funds and resources for a military build-up would have to come from the all-ready taxed civilian economy since no new or expanded sources of revenue are likely to emerge without foreign investment. Arms sales of course could be increased somewhat, but few nations are willing to purchase Russian equipment today at rock-bottom prices for fear of a lack of follow spares and support. Talk of dramatic increases are in essence a self-deception. In addition, any regime that adopts an Imperial mindset would only further increase the flight of hard-currency out of Russia for fears of confiscation.

Both a democracy and an authoritarian regime could take steps to curb corruption among government officials and to break up the burgeoning criminal organizations that virtually run the finance, export and retail segments of the economy. Other steps such as the protection of property rights and intellectual property must also be taken. Again, only a democracy can undertake these steps without creating challenges to its own power, however a Pinochet-model of economic development should not be dismissed.

Although certainly not as dramatic as the first two influences, the continuing *multi-ethnic construct* of Russia and its *lack of a definable political culture* are significant contributors to the shape of Russian foreign policy. Russia, unlike its predecessor the Soviet Union, is unlikely to split apart on ethnic lines yet significant enclaves of non-Russian minorities exist, whose sense of nationalism is going through a sustained increase. These minorities, located predominately in the North Caucasus continue to build a sense of ethnic community with a legitimate right to some form of

political autonomy even if it is within the Russian Federation. This pull of power to the periphery is likely to be copied other Autonomous Republics even though many of these minorities are thoroughly Russianized. The Federal structure gives them the opportunity to "grab as much autonomy as they can handle," and once seized, they are unlikely to let go. Between the latter and the truly nationalistic ethnic minorities, Russia cannot, in the foreseeable future, change its structure of political sub-divisions without incurring widespread opposition. Yet this structure, and with it the devolution of power to the periphery, is likely to produce continued and repeated political confrontations between the Federal and regional governments. Democrats and authoritarian rulers, alike, are confronted by regional governments seeking more power. For an authoritarian regime, these regimes, especially ethnically-based ones, offer a dangerous source for political opposition. In addition, the use of military or federal security structures to extend rule may be difficult at present, since many of these forces rely more on local governments for their care, feeding and pay than on the Federal government.

The last persistent factor, the lack of definable political culture, impacts on foreign policy in a negative manner. Without a definable political identity or underpinning to the state, Russia has few definable national interests beyond security. More importantly, the debate over Russia's internal political structure is defined in terms of its relationship with the West. How it values that relationship will impact on the extent Russia views the benefits of integrating in the community of Western nations, both economically and politically. The various pulls, both toward the West and East, have deep roots in the Russian political debate and they are unlikely to go away. A

disgruntled democratic government may turn away from the West, but it cannot turn far without choosing a self-imposed exile in the community of nations. By contrast, many of the authoritarian groups in Russia would lead it willfully away from the West in the mistaken belief that it can redefine its great power status by kicking around the new states along its southern periphery.

The influences discussed here, aptly named persistent factors, play a role equal to, if not more important than regime type, since any successor government will be forced by sheer necessity to address these issues. How and in what manner is where the break-out between democracy and totalitarianism will emerge, but both types of government, and all others in-between, will need to address these problems.

In spite of the long history of the Cold War, Western states, the United States in particular, have a very short attention span concerning Russia. This aspect is true even with the cottage industry of Russian studies, scholars and observers. Instead of endeavoring to understand the underlying motivations and issues, the West has become fixated on simple single choice decisions in regard to Russia, democracy or empire, friend or enemy, Gorbachev or chaos, Yeltsin or Zhirinovsky. This thesis' focus was to show that any of the above regime variations would suffer the same pulls and problems in relation to foreign relations. The focus by the West on these single descriptive categories creates the danger that the sources and motivations of Russian conduct will be obscured to our view by preconceived notions. Equally important, will be the West's failure to confront and act on the "persistent" problems Russia faces.

The recognition of these problems is vitally important since these are not just

impediments to democratic reform but they also represent the weaknesses of a potentially hostile totalitarian state as well. Recognition will provide the key first step in helping a friendly Russia or stymieing an emerging foe.

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